









# ESSAYS:

MORAL, POLITICAL AND LITERARY,

BY

DAVID HUME, ESQ.

(SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS FOR THE GOVERNMENT COLLEGES)

WITH

NOTES AND A NOTICE OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS

BY

ROBT. HAND, ESQ.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE.

---

Published by Authority of the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal.

---

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY D'ROZARIO AND CO., TANK-SQUARE,

1855.

"I shall always avow myself your disciple in metaphysics. I have learned more from your writings in this kind, than from all others put together. Your system appears to me not only coherent in all its parts, but likewise justly deduced from principles commonly received among philosophers; principles which I never thought of calling in question, until the conclusions which you draw from them in the "*Treatise of Human Nature*" made me suspect them. *Dr. Reid to Hume.*

Alike in ignorance, Man's reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little, or too much :

\* \* \* \* \*

Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd,  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world.

*Pope.*

## P R E F A C E.

---

A selection from the Essays of Hume forms part of the Course of Study, this Session, for the Government Colleges. As the work is scarce, and its price beyond the means of nine-tenths of our students, it was thought advisable to print a selection for the Department.—The present volume contains every Essay that is not objectionable as an enunciation of Hume's peculiar philosophy, except the very learned one on the Populousness of Ancient Nations, which appeared unsuitable for native students, or at least not quite in place in such a text book. The Essays that are included are printed *entire*. To emasculate an Author, to "mince him bit by bit," is a course that the Editor has a strong repugnance to: Hence it became necessary to add foot notes, to counteract the sneers and sophisms of a few passages, in Essays otherwise excellent, that betray the Author's unhappy prejudice against every thing connected with Religion. These passages are however but very few, and they are so little likely to hurt the reader, that the Editor believes the volume may be safely placed in the hands of Christian youth of both sexes.

The Essays will be found arranged in an order different from that in which they were published by the Author: It was thought advisable to let them follow one another according to the connection of subject.

The Editor has to add a few words touching his notice of Hume's Life and Writings. It has no great pretensions to literary excellence. It has been written piecemeal, now a little and then a little, whenever a leisure hour enabled him to take it up, and that has been seldom enough. His object has been to set before the student an exact portrait of the Author whose Essays he introduces them to, and this object he has endeavoured

consistently to follow out, so far as the notes in his possession, or the means he could command enabled him to do so. Pressed for time, he has freely used the remarks of others, whenever he felt that he could not himself do equal justice to any of Hume's works. Having deferred it to the last moment, he has been obliged literally to run through it *currente calamo*, without leisure so much as to read over his manuscript. He is very sensible that such an apology cannot altogether excuse the defects of the performance, but he trusts it will be allowed somewhat to palliate them; in as much as when he undertook to write the Essay, he had no idea that his time and attention would have been otherwise so completely occupied. This circumstance he trusts, will also plead his excuse for a few oversights and typographical errors (not many he is thankful) that have crept into the work. With all its defects however, the Editor trusts the volume will not be unacceptable to the public.

# CONTENTS.

An Essay on the Life and Writings of David Hume.	i
I. Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature.	1
II. Of National Characters.	5
III. Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion.	16
IV. Of the Standard of Taste.	19
V. Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing.	36
VI. Of Tragedy.	39
VII. Of Eloquence.	46
VIII. Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences.	54
IX. Of Refinements in the Arts.	71
X. Of Commerce.	80
XI. Of Money.	90
XII. Of Interest.	99
XIII. Of the Balance of Trade.	107
XIV. Of the Jealousy of Trade.	119
XV. Of Taxes.	122
XVI. Of Public Credit.	125
XVII. Of the Balance of Power.	136
XVIII. That Politics may be Reduced to a Science.	142
XIX. Of the Original Contract.	151
XX. Of the Origin of Government.	165
XXI. Of the Principles of Government.	168
XXII. Of Passive Obedience.	171
XXIII. Of Civil Liberty.	174
XXIV. Of the Liberty of the Press.	180
XXV. Of the Protestant Succession.	182
XXVI. Of the Independency of Parliament.	189
XXVII. Of Parties in General.	192
XXVIII. Of the Parties of Great Britain.	198
XXIX. Of the Coalition of Parties.	203
XXX. Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth.	208
XXXI. Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic.	219
XXXII. The Epicurean.	224
XXXIII. The Stoic.	229
XXXIV. The Platonist.	235
XXXV. The Sceptic.	237
XXXVI. Of Polygamy and Divorces.	252
XXXVII. On the Genuineness of Ossian's Poems.	259
XXXVIII. Of the different species of Philosophy.	267
XXXIX. Of the Origin of Ideas.	275
XL. Of the Association of Ideas.	279
A Dissertation on the Passions.	280
Notes.	305



# AN ESSAY

## ON

### THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DAVID HUME.

---

The Eighteenth Century was emphatically the Augustan Age of Letters in Europe; but no writings of even the Eighteenth Century exercised a more remarkable influence over the human mind than did those of David Hume, and of his intimate friend and fellow-philosopher Adam Smith. The name of Hume is not more intimately associated with the History of England, than it is with the History of Abstract Philosophy in Europe. To him we are bound by ties of gratitude not unlike those which will for ever endear Francis Bacon to the Scholar and the Philanthropist. Metaphysics owes almost as much to the one, as does Physics to the other: The inductive method of inquiry, so successfully introduced by Bacon into the realm of matter, Hume has, with a success as remarkable, applied to the realm of mind. His errors in a new field are indeed great and most lamentable: They exemplify his own assertion that "it is easy for a profound philosopher to commit a mistake in his subtle reasonings; and one mistake is the necessary parent of another, while he pushes on his consequences, and is not deterred from embracing any conclusion, by its unusual appearance, or its contradiction to popular opinion." He has, nevertheless, the no small distinction of having been among the first that showed the way in the application to Metaphysics of the only safe method of philosophical investigation, the *inductive*; and thus practically carried out the principles which the congenial mind of Des Cartes, the Father of modern Metaphysics, perceived and indicated nearly a century before. Dugald Stewart has observed with truth, "that by confining their attention to the sensible qualities of body, and to the sensible phenomena it exhibits, we know what discoveries Natural Philosophers have made; and if the labours of Metaphysicians shall ever be rewarded with similar success, it can only be by attentive and patient reflection on the subjects of their own consciousness." Hume early perceived the importance of conducting Ethical inquiries in this practical manner, and of rejecting the confused and interminable hypotheses and speculations which had brought the philosophy of mind into disrepute. "I found," he observes in a letter written to a physician, probably to Dr. George Cheyne, "that the Moral Philosophy transmitted to us by Antiquity, laboured under the same inconveniences that has been found in their Natural Philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience:—Every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness, without regarding Human Nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This therefore I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth." Accordingly, in his treatise of Human Nature he observes:—"It is evident that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to Human Nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it,



they still return back by one passage or another." \* \* \* \* \*

"Here then is the only expedient from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious, lingering method which we have hitherto followed, and, instead of taking, now and then, a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or centre of these sciences, to Human Nature itself; which, being once masters of, we may everywhere else hope for an easy victory." \* \* \*

"And as the science of Man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself, must be laid in experience and observation. It is no astonishing reflection to consider that the application of experimental philosophy to Moral subjects should come after that to Natural, at the distance of above a whole century; since we find, in fact, that there was about the same interval between the origin of these sciences; and that, reckoning from Thales to Socrates, the space of time is nearly equal to that betwixt my Lord Bacon, and some late Philosophers in England, who have begun to put the science of Man on a new footing, and have engaged the attention, and excited the curiosity of the Public." Of this Treatise of Human Nature, Dugald Stewart observes:—In some of these practical applications of metaphysical principles, we may perceive the genius of several inquiries which have since been successfully prosecuted by Hume's countrymen." He elsewhere observes:—"It may be questioned if the errors which he adopted from his predecessors, would not have kept their ground to this day, had not his sagacity displayed so clearly the consequences which they necessarily involve." And Kant, in his *Prolegomena ad Metaphysicam quamque futuram, quæ qua Scientia poterit prodire*, writes as follows:—"It was these suggestions of Hume's (on Causation) which first, many years ago, roused me from my dogmatical slumbers, and gave to my inquiries quite a different direction in this field of speculative philosophy."—Whilst therefore it is freely owned, that the progress of Science has since, most satisfactorily exposed the great and fundamental errors of Hume; it seems but candid to acknowledge, that this progress is in no inconsiderable a degree attributable to him who showed the way, in an untried region. It is the glorious result of that course of inquiry into the Philosophy of Mind, which he so closely followed out, to erroneous conclusion indeed, or erroneous premises, but by the application of correct principles;—a course which, with more certain data, and under happier circumstances, has brought Metaphysics to the proud eminence it holds in our Age.

The Philosopher to whom Moral Science owes this "debt immense of endless gratitude" first saw the light in the good city of Edinburgh, on the 26th of April A. D. 1711 o. s. Of the parents and family of Hume we know but little more than what he himself tells us in his "Own Life:—"My family was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was, of course, slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant; leaving me with an elder brother, and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and

education of her children." David was the second son of Joseph Hume, or Home,\* proprietor of the Estate of Ninewells,† in Berwickshire. He was a member of the Faculty of Advocates; but he early gave up the legal profession, and lived as a retired country gentleman. David's mother was a daughter of Sir David Falconer of Newton, who filled the office of Lord President of the Court of Session, from A. D. 1682 to 1685, and is known as the collector of a series of decisions of the Court of Sessions, published A. D. 1701.

There is no question that the ancestors of Hume were highly respectable, and it is quite possible that the family was descended from a noble stock. His anxiety in tracing his descent, affords a striking exemplification of the remark he himself makes on the pride of family, in one of his Essays:—"We, all of us, still retain these prejudices in favour of birth and family, and neither in our serious occupations, nor most careless amusements, can we ever get entirely rid of them." He gives us, at some length, the result of his genealogical inquiries, in a letter to Alexander Home, of Whitfield; where he observes that it was a tradition in the family, that they were descended from Lord Home, who is said to have given to his younger son, the lands of Tinningham, East Lothian, and to his grandchild, when his father had dissipated this estate, the land of Ninewells, a patrimony that came down by regular descent, to the father of our Author. The Lord Home to whom the Philosopher so proudly traces his descent, is, he tells us, the founder of Dunglass, who went over to France with the Douglas, in the reign of the 5th Henry, and fell in one of the battles fought by the Regent, the Duke of Bedford, against Charles VII. of France. This genealogy, we have said, may possibly be correct; and yet we fear that Hume's pride of birth, is but one more instance of that strange weakness of human nature, that overlooks the solid worth of intellectual greatness, to set a preposterously inadequate value on the adventitious circumstance of noble descent. We might indeed smile at this weakness in the sensitive and unfortunate bard of Twickenham; but if man could ever be free of this petty ambition, we should certainly have expected to find David Hume unmindful of the little rank that has its origin in the breath of princes—above the meanness that clings to the heraldic chronicle of a lordly genealogy, as to the *summum bonum* of life. In the letter referred to above, Hume thus defends his pride of birth:—"I am not of the opinion of some, that these matters are altogether to be slighted. Though we should pretend to be wiser than our ancestors, yet it is arrogant to pretend to be wiser than the other nations of Europe, who, all of them, except perhaps the English, make great account of their family descent. I doubt that our morals have not much improved, since we began to think riches the sole thing worth regarding." In the 2nd book of his Treatise

\* Home observes "The practice of spelling *Hume* is by far the most ancient, and most general, till about the Restoration, when it became common to spell it *Home*, contrary to the pronunciation."

† "The Estate of Ninewells is so named from a cluster of springs of that number. Their situation is picturesque. They burst forth from a gentle declivity in front of the mansion, which has on each side, a semicircular rising bank, covered with fine timber, and fall, after a short time, into the bed of the river *Whit-water*, which forms a boundary in the front."

of Human Nature, Hume enters upon a careful analysis of the philosophy of family pride. He was conscious, it may safely be inferred, of his weakness; and sought to convince himself that it was *not* a weakness, but an elevating passion, as noble as it is natural.

There are no accounts extant of the youth of Hume, other than his own, that he passed through the ordinary course of education with success. His name appears in the matriculation book of the University of Edinburgh as David Home, a student in the Greek class, which he entered Feb. 20th A. D. 1723. The records of the University contain no other mention of him, though, doubtless, he passed through the usual College Course of his time.

In Hume's correspondence with a College friend, Michael Ramsay, we trace the manner of life of the young Philosopher, shortly after he left College. The following account of his pursuits will be read with no little interest; it is a striking exemplification of the trite adage that "the boy is father to the man." The same love of ease, of retirement, and of study, that is here described, is characteristic of Hume through life. He writes:—"Just now I am entirely confined to myself and Library for diversion. Since we parted

—Ea sola voluptas  
Solamenque mali—

And indeed to me they are not a small one, as I take no more of them than I please, for I hate task reading, and I diversify them at pleasure, sometimes a Philosopher, sometimes a Poet, which change is not unpleasant, nor disserviceable neither; for what will more surely engrave upon my mind a Tusculan Disputation of Cicero's, de *egritudine lenienda*, than an Eclogue or Georgic of Virgil's? The Philosopher's wise man, and the Poet's husbandman agree in peace of mind, in liberty, in independence on fortune, and in contempt of riches, power, and glory. Every thing is placid and quiet in both; nothing perturbed or disordered.

At secunda quies, et nescia fallere vita  
Dives opum variarum: At latis otia fundis,  
Speluncæ vivique lacus, et frigida Tempe,  
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somnos  
Non absunt.

These lines will, in my opinion, come nothing short of the finest sentence in Cicero; and is more *to me*, as Virgil's life is more the subject of my ambition, being what I can apprehend to be more within my power: For the perfectly wise man, that outbraves fortune, is surely greater than the husbandman, who slips by her; and indeed this pastoral and saturnine happiness I have, in a great measure, come at just now. I live like a king, pretty much by myself, neither full of action nor perturbation, *molles somnos*. This state however, I foresee, is not to be relied upon. My peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by Philosophy, to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness, and elevation of soul, is to be found only in study and contemplation. This can alone teach us to look down on human accidents. 'You must allow me to talk thus like a philosopher: It is a subject that I think much on, and could talk all day long on.'

We find him once again in the bosom of his family, in the quiet retreat of Ninewells, at the age of 35, when his fame as a philosopher was pretty well established, but no memoranda remain, to give us an insight into his domestic life at this period.

It is a striking circumstance, not unworthy of special mention as illustrative of the peculiar cast of Hume's mind, that though his early life and some of his after years were passed in the vicinity of scenes such as the Field of Flodden and Holwell Hough, scenes that might well enkindle the chivalry and the patriotism of every Scot, and shake his inmost soul with glorious passion, they do not appear, so far as we can judge from his works, to have had any influence on him. He betrays no enthusiasm in describing the historic events that hallow these haunts of his childhood to his countrymen: The narrative is as regularly cold and formal as is his description of the most ordinary events of history. And yet the philosophic mind of Hume was not wholly devoid of enthusiasm; but it was an enthusiasm peculiar to his mental character. He had no poetic feeling, no warm imagination. Even in youth, when the freshness of life's opening prospect, and the morning tints of hope, are wont so powerfully and so happily to affect the fancy, uninfluenced by the stern cold realities of "this working day world," Hume seems to have been unaffected by their influence. He had no taste for the poetic, the beautiful, the sublime; no sympathy with aught that was not purely and severely intellectual. Early directed to philosophical pursuits, the powers of his mind were centred in these alone. His was the eye of a Philosopher, not of a Poet. The Muse's ray never invested Nature to him,

With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun.

So very little was he susceptible of warmth of feeling, so entirely had a love of Philosophy become "the tyrant spirit of his thought," that even when he discusses the passion of Love in his Essays, he does so as systematically as if he had subjected it to a chemical analysis, and treats it with as much method as if it were fettered by the rules of syllogism. So completely indeed had a cold bleak philosophy frozen the warm tide of passion in his soul, that in his correspondence with the softer sex he never, even by chance, betrays a warmth of sentiment. He is said indeed to have once perpetrated verses to some fair unknown, to tell her of his "secret wounds;" but the same cold strains that tell "each motion in his heart," unmistakably speak it destitute of aught akin to poetic passion. The only other attempt at versifying that claims to be his, is his Epistle to Mr. John Medina; and there could not be clearer evidence that imagination in his mind had been early and completely stifled. The only instance that we have of any approach to warmth of feeling, in the calm, cold Philosopher, is in his Journal kept on his way to Turin, as Secretary to General St. Clair. Writing from Mantua, on the 11th of May, he observes:—"We are now on classic ground, and I have kissed the Earth that produced Virgil, and have admired those fertile plains that he has so finely celebrated." This sympathy with the Mantuan Muse is remarkable; but it is in keeping with his early appreciation of Virgil's pastorals,

and his profound longings after the peaceful retirement of a country life. Hume's cast of mind is not unaptly described by Burton in his remarks on an early unpublished Essay on Chivalry. "The powers of reason displayed are as bold and original, as the imagination is meagre and servile. The reflections on gothic architecture are the common-place opinion of the day, uttered by one who was singularly destitute of sympathy with the human intellect in its early efforts to resolve itself into symmetry and elegance; whose mind shrunk from the contemplation of any work of man, *that did not bear the stamp of high intellectual culture.* The same want of sympathy with man in his rude and grand, thro' inharmonious efforts, here attends, both the chivalric manners, and the solemn architecture of the dark ages. Of the former he has made a cold, clear, unsympathising, perhaps accurate estimate. The latter, unless a large proportion of the architectural enthusiasts of the present day have raised the taste of the age upon false foundations, he utterly misappreciated." What place could patriotism, *as a passion*, have in such a mind?

The longings after pastoral simplicity which breathe through the letter to his friend Michal Ramsay, that has been noticed above, have induced the belief that Hume's early life was free from the bold grasping ambition so evident in his after career. But the belief is erroneous. Ambition is as natural to a literary mind, as it is to a statesman or to a hero. It is emphatically an attribute of

Conquerors and Kings  
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add  
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things  
That stir too strongly the soul's secret springs.

It is implanted in such a mind as it comes fresh from the great Creator's hand, and developes with its opening powers. Circumstances may be propitious to its growth, and may bring this "fire and motion of the soul" to a glorious blaze; and cause it to put forth the mightiest energies of an indomitable will; but the seeds of ambition are in the mind. Ambition is inseparable from Genius. It is born with its birth, and it strengthens with its strength. Hume tells us in his *Own Life*:—"I was seized very early with a passion for Literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life." He might perhaps, in the calm enjoyment of his rural retreat, have deceived himself into the notion that ambition was not in him "a fever at the core;" but who can believe the passion he avows for Literature to have been free from ambition? "In whatever light" says one of his Biographers "we may view his speculative opinions, we gather from the habits of his life, and from the indications we possess of his passing thoughts, that he devotedly acted up to the principle that his genius, and power of application, should be laid out with the greatest prospect of permanent advantage to mankind. He was an economist of all his talents from early youth. No memoirs of a Literary man present a more cautious and vigilant husbandry of his mental powers and acquirements. There is no instance of a man of genius, who has wasted, less in idleness, or in unavailing pursuits. Money was not his object, nor was *temporary* fame; though of the

means of independent livelihood, and a good repute among men, he never lost sight. But his ruling object of ambition, pursued in poverty and in riches; in health and in sickness; in laborious obscurity, and amidst the blaze of fame; was to establish a *permanent name*, resting on the foundation of literary achievements, likely to live as long as human thought endured, and mental philosophy was studied." This is the testimony of a friend: But so strong was the influence of ambition over Hume's mind, that we find Blakey, in his History of Philosophy, assigns it as the secret motive of his scepticism:—"Perhaps we may find a key to this sceptical spirit of Hume's, in the character of his mind. He tells us unreservedly, and the statement is corroborated by all his personal friends, that *the love of notoriety and fame was the ruling motive in all his literary undertakings*. To startle, to dazzle, to surprise, to excite attention or even opposition, was his supreme delight. Hence we always find him rummaging among topics which afford him sufficient material for the gratification of his paradoxical propensities. The doctrines of the existence or non-existence of a material world, cause and effect, and free will, the academical questions on the first principles of natural theology, were all fruitful topics for sceptical doubts, and he pushed his inquiries into the most remote corners of them, to endeavour to obtain something which should induce mankind, to the end of time, to admire the subtlety and profundity of his Genius."

In his correspondence with Michael Ramsay, at the immature age of sixteen, we have the earliest trace of his Treatise of Human Nature, a work projected apparently before he left College. He thus alludes to the rough notes and papers which had been accumulating ere he ceased to be, in the ordinary sense, a student. "Would you have me send in my loose incorrect thoughts? Were such worth the transcribing? All the progress that I made, is but drawing the outlines on loose bits of paper; here a hint of a passion; there a phenomenon in the mind accounted for; in another the alteration of these accounts; sometimes a remark upon an author I have been reading; and none of them worth to any body, and, I believe, scarce to myself." These desultory thoughts and loose fragments, were the materials of his first philosophical work, (one of the most useful pioneers in the course of Inductive Metaphysics,) published in January A. D. 1739.

When he was about 17 years of age, Hume entered on the study of the Law; but such pursuits were not congenial, and before he had been so engaged many months, he abruptly relinquished a study that he found to be to him an unprofitable drudgery. He thus notices the circumstance in his *Own Life*: "My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy, and general learning; and while they fancied that I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring." In his Essay on Eloquence, comparing the laws of the Greeks and Romans with modern Law, he observes:—"The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and incompatible with every

other study and profession. How shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome occupations, in order to gather the flowers of Parnassus?" Hume's is by no means a solitary instance in the annals of Literature, of a dislike to legal studies; but his sudden desertion of the Law, is to be attributed to a growing ambition to become the founder of a new School of Philosophy. All his faculties seem for years to have been devoted to this great work: It is no wonder then, that his mind, crowded with the image of his new system, could see nothing else in life worthy of pursuit. "The law," he observes "which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world, but that of a scholar and a philosopher." His System of Philosophy he characterises as "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects:" And he thus describes the temper of mind wherein he followed out his views: "Upon examination of those (the writings of ancient philosophers) I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects; but led me to seek out some new medium by which truth might be established." And advertg to his predecessors in this field he says, "I believe it is a certain fact, that most of the Philosophers who have gone before me, have been overthrown by the greatness of their Genius, and that little more is required to make a man succeed in this study than to *throw off all prejudices* either for his own opinion or for those of others." How mortifying to the pride of human reason is the reflection, that a temper of mind so judicious, so happy for the successful prosecution of Truth, should in its excess, lead to errors so lamentable as those which Hume was betrayed into; and be the source of that fatal scepticism which grew to be the habit of his mind, and unfitted it for a just balance of moral evidence. It is a trite remark, whose truth the daily observation of life confirms, that extremes meet; and the extremes of credulity and scepticism alike disqualify the mind for Ethical pursuits.

Hume had deserted the legal profession for Philosophy, but he soon became conscious of the unpleasant fact that Philosophy will not support life; and that the feast of reason, how keen soever the mental appetite, and its gratification how pleasant, will not atone for the want of perishable food and drink, nor satisfy the cravings of our grosser nature. Sickness likewise painfully convinced him that the mind, aspire as it will beyond the things of sense, is still fettered with

The clay-cold bonds that round one being cling.

And he therefore prudently resolved to betake himself to some employment. His choice, he tells us, he found, lay between the life of a travelling Tutor, and that of a Merchant. He preferred the latter, and A. D. 1734 he went to Bristol, "with some recommendations to eminent merchants," "but"—to allow him to speak for himself,—“in a few months I found that scene totally unsuitable to me.” This is all the information he gives us of his stay at Bristol, and his life as a merchant's clerk. We next find him in France, and he gives us the following explanation of his "motives and intentions" in taking this step:—"I went over to France

with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature."

• During Hume's stay in France, which extended over three years, he completed his *Treatise of Human Nature*. It is a curious and interesting coincidence, that this work was perfected in the Jesuits' College of La Fleche—where he resided for about two years—the institution where the great Des Cartes was educated, whose mental character bears so striking a resemblance to his, and who may justly be looked upon as the intellectual progenitor of the English philosopher.

In January A. D. 1739 were published in London the two first volumes of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. The first Book treats of the Understanding and the second of the Passions: The third, which was published a year later, treats of Virtue and Vice in general. Of this *Treatise*, which will maintain its place in the Literature of Europe as long as the Science of Metaphysics is studied, Dugald Stuart says:—"Among the many very exceptionable doctrines involved in these juvenile speculations, there are various discussions equally refined and solid, in which he has happily exemplified the application of metaphysical analysis to questions connected with Taste, with the philosophy of Jurisprudence, and with the theory of Government. Of these discussions, some afterwards appeared in a more popular form in his *Philosophical and Literary Essays*, and still retain a place in the latest editions of his works; but others not less curious, have been suppressed by the Author, probably, from an idea that they were too abstruse to interest the curiosity of ordinary readers."

• It would be out of place to enter, at any length, into the principles of Hume's Philosophy, to discuss the accuracy of his premises and conclusions, or to examine the influence of his views on modern Metaphysics. It will suffice to give a general idea of the nature of this work: The inquisitive can consult more elaborate notices for further information.

• The only purely metaphysical or ontological portion of the *Treatise of Human Nature* is the first Book, which, especially as it has been recast in a subsequent work, has a prominent place in the Literature of Intellectual Philosophy. It has been happily observed of this *Treatise* that "about the greatest service it has done to philosophy is that purely incidental one of teaching human reason its own weakness; of showing how easily the noblest fabric of human thought may be undermined by a destroying agency of power, not greater than that of the constructive genius, which has raised it. In this respect it has done to philosophy the invaluable service of teaching philosophers their own fallibility. In all the departments of thought, and not only in the world of thought, but in that of action, the spirit of human infallibility is the greatest obstacle to truth and goodness: Whether it appears to protect a system which the thinker has formed for himself; or assumes the more modest shape of maintaining, that, among conflicting systems, he has made choice of that which is absolutely and certainly right, while all others which in any way differ



from it, are as absolutely and certainly wrong; this offspring of the pride of human intellect is an equally dangerous enemy of human improvement; and to have contributed to its downfall is, of itself, no small achievement for one mind."

The 2nd Book of the Treatise of Human Nature contains mixed Metaphysics and Ethics, with several valuable notices of physiological phenomena. "The acuteness," observes the same judicious writer, "which the solitary metaphysician brought to his aid when he chose to contemplate mankind, is not the least interesting feature in his book. That he could have seen much of men, since his life had been but brief, and his converse with books great, is not probable. Yet Chesterfield and Rochefoucauld did not observe men more closely and truly, though they may have done so more extensively."

A description of the literary merits of this work will convey a fair idea of Hume's writings in general. Its defects are more or less observable in all the productions of his pen; the *scotticisms* which he was never quite free from, although to the last at considerable pains to purge his diction of them; a few obsolete elliptical combinations; and a frequent neglect of the increment on the perfect tense: Its excellencies are the distinctive excellencies of his style; its simplicity, clearness, and flexibility; its methodical arrangement of subject; its severe connection of thought; its logical exactness of reasoning; and its freedom from all pedantic display of scholarship. All these exist in his first work, the production of a youth of twenty seven, though not quite in the perfection in which they afterwards attended his pen. Of the style of this work, and its influence on the Literature of his country, Stewart observes: "The publication of Mr. Hume's Treatise was attended with another important effect in Scotland. He had cultivated the art of writing with much greater success than any of his predecessors, and had formed his taste on the best models of English composition. The influence of his example appears to have been great and general; and was in no instance more remarkable than in the style of his principal antagonists, all of whom, in studying his system, have caught, in no inconsiderable degree, the purity, polish, and precision of his diction. Nobody I believe will deny that Locke himself, considered as an English writer, is far surpassed not only by Hume, but by Reid, Campbell, Gerard and Beattie: And of this fact it will not be easy to find a more satisfactory explanation, than in the critical eye with which they were led to canvass a work equally distinguished by the depth of its reasonings, and by the attractive form in which they are exhibited."

The circumstance is worthy of remark that, shortly before the publication of this work of Hume's, Butler gave the world his treatise on the Analogy between Natural and Revealed Religion, in which there is a masterly assertion of Personal Identity, of Providence, a Future State, and of Miracles, providentially designed, doubtless, to counteract the mischievous tendency of Hume's Scepticism on these subjects—subjects that are of the gravest importance to Man—"That Butler was perfectly aware, before the publication of Hume's work, of the encouragement

given to scepticism by the logical maxims then in vogue, is evident from the concluding paragraph of his short *Essay on Personal Identity*.\* Had it been published a few years later, nobody would have doubted that it had been directly pointed at the general strain and spirit of Hume's philosophy."—Butler perceived, long before the *Treatise of Human Nature* was published, the dangerous consequences of Locke's theory of the origin of our ideas, and probably he was not altogether displeased to see the logical deductions from Locke's doctrines, so forcibly and consistently developed as they were in this work.

The contrast between these two great men painfully shows how a mighty Intellect may arrive at erroneous conclusions in the difficult and illusive science of Abstract Philosophy, if, at the outset, an overweening confidence in its own unaided powers gives to its speculations a wrong direction; and leads it but once astray on the dark and troubled ocean of Metaphysics, without star or compass whereby to guide its course aright.

The reception given by the literary world to the two first books of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, is thus described by Hume in his *Own Life*:—"Never literary attempt was so unfortunate. It fell dead born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." This is not however quite correct. The work was noticed at length, and with some ability, in a periodical entitled "*The History of the Works of the Learned*." The criticism is severe, sarcastic, and too often intemperate; but it concludes with this *amende*—"The treatise bears incontestable marks of a great capacity, of a soaring genius, but young, and not yet thoroughly practised. The subject is vast and noble, as any that can exercise the understanding; but it requires a very mature judgment to handle it, as becomes its dignity and importance. The utmost prudence, tenderness, and delicacy are requisite to this desirable issue. Time and use may ripen these qualities in our author, and we shall, probably, have reason to consider this, compared with his later productions, in the same light as we view the juvenile works of Milton; or the first manner of a Raphael or other celebrated painter."

About this time began Hume's correspondence with the Berkeley of Scotland, Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. To this distinguished scholar Hume submitted the manuscript of the third book of his *Treatise*. Of the correspondence between them which followed, Burton shrewdly observes that it illustrates

\* "But though we are thus certain that we are the same agents or living beings now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches; yet it is asked, whether we may not possibly be deceived in it? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever, because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt whether perception by memory can in this be depended upon, may doubt also whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also includes memory, or indeed whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no farther. For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove than by other perceptions of exactly the same kind: with them, and which there is but the same ground to suspect: Or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved, than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves"—*Butler's Dissertation I. On Personal Identity*.

Hume's method of working with human nature, "not as an artist, but an anatomist, whose minute critical examination might be injured by any burst of feeling or eloquence."

Through Hutcheson, Hume became acquainted with Adam Smith, then but a youth, the early dawnings of whose genius gave a happy promise of its full meridian glory. Their acquaintance soon ripened into a friendship so sincere, that the history of letters affords no instance of intimacy more cordial than existed between these two philosophers.

The third book of the *Treatise of Human Nature* was published A. D. 1740. It is purely Ethical, and is devoted to an inquiry into the origin and proper system of morals, and its application to political society. It foreshadows the systems which have been respectively called the *utilitarian* and the *selfish*: The one assumes as the standard of moral excellence, the tendency and effects of an action as hurtful or beneficial; the other refers our deeds to selfishness, and teaches that they spring from impulses connected with self, *that is* with the passions and desires of the Agent.

"Hume considered his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*," says Sir Jas. Mackintosh, "as the best of his writings. It is very creditable to his character, that he should have looked back with most complacency on a Tract the least distinguished for originality, and the least tainted with paradox, among his philosophical works; but deserving of all commendation for the elegant perspicuity of the style, and the novelty of illustration and inference with which he unfolded to general readers a doctrine too simple, too certain, and too important, to remain till his time undiscovered among philosophers. His diction has indeed neither the grace of Berkeley, nor the strength of Hobbes; but it is without the verbosity of the former, or the rugged sternness of the latter. His manner is more lively, more easy, more ingratiating, and, if the word may be so applied, more amusing than that of any other metaphysical writer. He knew himself too well, to be, as Dr. Johnson asserted, an imitator of Voltaire; who, as it were, embodied in his own person all the wit, and quickness, and ingenuity of a people which surpasses other nations in these brilliant qualities. If he must be supposed to have had an eye on any French writer, it would be a more plausible guess, that he sometimes copied, with a temperate hand, the unexpected thoughts and familiar expressions of Fontenelle.—Though he *carefully* reeded his writings, in their successive editions, yet they still contain Scotticisms and Gallicisms enough to employ the successors of such critics as those who exulted over the *patavinity* of the Roman Historian. His own great and modest mind would have been satisfied with the praise that cannot be withheld from him, that there is no writer in our language who, through long works, is more agreeable; and it is no derogation from him, that, as a Scotsman, he did not reach those native and secret beauties, characteristic of a language, which are never attained in elaborate composition, but by a very small number of those who familiarly converse in it from infancy."

Such was the effect on Hume's mind of the reception his first work

had from the public, that not only did he publish the next, the *Essays, Moral and Political*, without his name; but he evinces no little anxiety in the advertisement, to represent himself as a new author. These *Essays* were published, A. D. 1741, in Edinburgh.—The advertisement states that most of them “were wrote with a view of being published as a weekly paper, and were intended to comprehend the designs of both the *Spectator* and the *Craftsman*.” And he claims the approval of his readers for his “moderation, and impartiality in his method of handling political subjects.” On this point Burton observes that “there is a wonderful impartiality in the *Essays*, and an acuteness of observation which, to the reader who keeps in view how little the true workings of the Constitution were noticed in that day, is indeed remarkable.”—“Hume’s isolation from public life,” he continues, “gave him qualifications for examining our Political Constitution, such as Montesque, and DeLome, and Raumer possessed, whose judgment was not obscured, nor their feelings excited by any connection, with the workings of the system which they have described.”—Sir Jas. Mackintosh says of these *Essays*, and those which followed them, that “whatever may be thought of the contents of some of them, they must be ever regarded as the best models in any language of the short but full, of the clear and agreeable, though deep discussion of difficult questions.”

The most remarkable of the *Essays*, those on which Hume bestowed more than ordinary attention, and those which best display his skill as an Essayist are—The Epicurean, The Stoic, The Platonist, and The Sceptic. “They are,” say Burton, “suggested apparently by the style and method of the *Spectator*. There is no attempt either to support or to attack the systems represented by the names of the *Essays*; nor is there a description, or so much as a definition of them: But on each occasion a member of one of these celebrated schools speaks in his own person, and describes the nature of the satisfaction he finds in his own code of philosophy, as a solution of the great difficulty of the right rule of thought and action. The Epicurean takes a flight beyond that of Hume’s other works: It departs from the cold atmosphere of philosophy, and desires to *fascinate*, as well as to enlighten. But though it possesses all the marks of a fine intellect, the reader is apt to feel how far more sweetly and gracefully the subject would have been handled by Addison, to whose department of literature it seems of right to belong. The follower of Epicurus is not represented as indulging in that gross licentiousness, or wallowing in that disgusting sty, which the representatives of Diogenes Laertius and others have impressed on the vulgar associations with the name of that master. On the other hand, the picture is far from embodying what many maintain to be the fundamental precept of Epicurus, that happiness being the great end sought by man, the proper method of reaching it is by the just regulation of the passions and propensities, a precept embodied in the

Sperne voluptates: Nocet empta dolere voluptas.

Hume, who was not correcting errors, or instructing his readers in the true meaning of terms, or appreciation of character, draws, in the Epicurean, a picture of one who is not gross, or grovelling in his

pleasures, and who restrains himself, lest he should outrun enjoyment; but whose ruling principle is still that of the voluptuary.

The reader expects, belike, to find an attempt to draw his own picture in the Sceptic, but it is not to be found there. The Sceptic of the *Essays* is not a man analyzing the principles of knowledge, to find wherein they consist, but one who is dissatisfied with rules of morality; and who, examining the current codes, one after another, tosses them aside as unsatisfactory.

It is into the Stoic that the writer has thrown most of his heart and sympathy; and it is in that sketch that—though probably without intention—some of the features of his own character are portrayed. There are passages which have considerable unison of tone with those autobiographical documents in which he describes himself as having laboured to subdue the rebellious passions, to reduce the mind to a regulated system, to drive from it the influence of petty impressions, to hold one great object of life in view, and to sacrifice before that object whatever stood in the way of his firmly-settled purpose."

The success of these *Essays* was complete. "The favorable reception given them, soon made me forget," Hume says in his *Own Life*, "my former disappointment." He attributes this great success to the favorable opinion Butler entertained and everywhere expressed of them. Within the year a second edition was called for, and published A. D. 1742.—The great popularity of the *Essays* rekindled the Author's hopes of the ultimate success of his Philosophy. In a letter to Henry Home (Lord Kames) he says:—"They may prove like dung with marl, and bring forward the rest of my Philosophy, which is of a more durable, though of a harder and more stubborn nature."

A third edition was published A. D. 1748, when two of the *Essays* in the previous edition—on Essay writing, and on the character of Sir Robert Walpole,—were omitted, and three others were added—Of National Character, The Original Contract, and Passive Obedience.—The first of these contains some very curious incidental notices of ancient morals and habits, so adapted to modern colloquial language and habits, as to make the descriptions quite as clear to the unlearned or to the learned! In the other two, which are subjects that have now almost dropped out of political discussion, Hume engaged in the long conflict in which Milton, Hobbes, Locke, and Filmer took part—he engaged in it however but as an arbitrator that sought to adjust the differences between conflicting theories, by a dispassionate examination of the merits of each. These *Essays* are in fact but a skilful adaptation of his Utilitarian Theory to Politics.

Hume's correspondence, carried on about this time with some of the most distinguished scholars of Scotland, is characterised by depth and originality of thought, and abounds with just criticisms clothed in proper language, and written in a style at once precise, clear, and familiar.—It is perhaps not out of place incidentally to call attention to the circumstance noticed by some of his Biographers, that among the letters addressed to Hume are several from private Gentlemen, unknown to Fortune or to Fame, which afford a striking exemplification of the remark we remember to have seen somewhere—"There is many a rich stone

laid up in the bowels of the Earth, many a fair pearly in the bosome of the Sea, that never was seene, nor never shall bee;”—Or as the Poet has rendered it

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear :  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

These letters are evidence of how much elegant scholarship and philosophy slumbered in the mind of the gentry of this remarkable age of letters : They justify the observation that as many are poets who have never penned their inspirations, so many are philosophers who have never either penned their philosophy, or so much as put their thoughts into shape in their own minds. The two operations of induction and analysis proceed in every human mind with more or less success; but it is only where literary ambition, or pecuniary necessity, or the desire to head a system, prompts a man to collect and put into shape their results, that they are given to the world. Instances have occurred in which they have appeared very nearly in their raw unwrought form. Thus, ‘Tucker’s Light of Nature,’ is nothing more than the reflections of an English country gentleman, collected and strung together. Paley and Reid used them as if they had themselves gone through the operation, and put the results into shape; while the late William Hazlitt was at the pains of writing an abridgment of the book. It was fortunate for philosophy that these disconnected observations and thoughts were collected and preserved : And the reflection leads to the recollection of the quantity of valuable thoughts that any man, who notices the course of conversation around him, hears produced and dropped. In after-dinner social intercourse, in general verbal criticisms of books or men, how much of the gold of true philosophy is scattered away with the dross; lost almost at the moment it is uttered, and forgotten both by hearer and speaker.” So true is it, that circumstances make the man.—Who that is attentive to the events of life, a spectator of what transpires in this “clouded maze of Fate” has not often had occasion to observe what rich and precious ore is to be met with in the casual correspondence, the every day conversation, the ordinary remarks of many who keep the noiseless tenour of their way—splendid Intellects, lost to the world, that under happier auspices might have enriched the ample page of knowledge, and contributed a large increase to the glorious “spoils of Time.”

In the year 1744 the chair of Ethics and Psychology in the University of Edinburgh, became vacant by the resignation of Dr. Pringle, afterwards Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society. Hume applied for the appointment, and was of course unsuccessful. It is not a little surprising that he should have unnecessarily subjected himself to the mortification of a refusal. How could the Author of the Treatise of Human Nature expect to be appointed, in the face of Christendom, to such a Professorship in a Christian University. His application was not so much as noticed, at least publicly and officially.

We shall pass over the episode in Hume’s life connected with Lord Annandale. It affords but little of instruction or of interest to the ordi-

nary reader. It is one of those incidents that have given rise to painful disputes that are better buried in oblivion.

Shortly after Hume's connection with Lord Annandale terminated, he was offered, and he accepted, the post of Secretary to Genl. St. Clair, the Military Commander of the Expedition designed against Canada, but which terminated in an incursion on the coast of France. In this expedition the Philosopher was not only Secy. to the General, but was also appointed by him to the office of Judge Advocate of the Forces. The following judicious observations of one of his biographers point out the influence which this appointment had on the future Historian:—“As Niebuhr was an eye witness of the battle of Copenhagen, so Hume also had thus an opportunity of observing some practical warlike operations, though they were on a much smaller scale, and were witnessed in much less exciting circumstances, than those which attended the position of the citizen of Copenhagen. Thus although not themselves soldiers, these two great historians swell the list previously containing the names of Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Guicciardini, Davila, and Rapin, of those historians of warfare, who have witnessed its practical operations. Voltaire, when the accuracy of his description of a battle was questioned by one who had been engaged in it, bid the soldier keep to his profession of fighting, and not interfere with another man's, which was that of writing: But there is little doubt that the person who would accurately describe military manœuvres, will have his task facilitated by having actually witnessed warlike operations, on however small a scale, and how unlike soever to those which he has to describe. Scott considered that he had derived much of his facility as a Narrative Historian from his services in the Mid-Lothian Yeomanry; and Gibbon found that to be an active officer in the Hampshire Militia was not without its use to the historian of the latter days of Rome.” The following extract from a letter written by the Philosopher to Henry Home, on the return of the Expedition, will show that he was of the same way of thinking:—“I have an invitation to go over to Flanders with the General (St. Clair). I must own I have a great curiosity to see a campaign, but I am deterred by the view of the expense, and am afraid that living in the Camp, without any character, and without any thing to do, would appear ridiculous. Had I any fortune which would give me a prospect of leisure, and an opportunity to prosecute my historical projects, *nothing could be more useful to me.*” This evidently incidental allusion to his historical projects, is the first glimpse we have of the Philosopher as an Historian—These projects resulted in that noble monument of genius, the History of England, which, with all its faults, will be coeval with the English tongue, and be ever looked up to as an authority in English History.

After having noticed the part he bore in the expedition to the Court of France, Hume mentions his second appointment under Genl. St. Clair in his Own Life, as follows:—“Next year, to wit 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as *Aid-de-camp*

to the General, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Capt. Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life. I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointment, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: In short I was now master of near a thousand pounds." He entered on the duties of this appointment in the beginning of 1748.

During his journey to Turin, Hume kept up a correspondence with his brother in the form of a journal, that gives a detailed account of his adventures and observations, quite as entertaining to the reader at the present day, as it was to his family, for whose amusement he wrote it. His descriptions are lively and exact; especially of the Alpine Scenery which excited his admiration, and of the banks of the Rhine, the accuracy of which is recognised even at the present day. The reader traces in his journal of these scenes, that "blending of all beauties" for which the banks of the majestic Rhine is so remarkable;

Streams and dolls,  
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, corn-field, mountain, vine.

But not the

Chiefless castles, breathing storn farewells  
From gray, but leafy walls, where ruin greenly dwells.

His graphic description passes in review before us, with a force and truth that is remarkable, all that Byron has so exquisitely pictured of

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom  
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,  
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,  
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,  
The wild rocks, shaped as they had turrets been,  
In mockery of man's art; and these withal,  
A race of faces happy as the scene,  
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,  
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

But a material exception to the faithfulness of the picture is the omission of all notice of the feudal fortresses *as such*; and it is matter of surprise that the greatest Historian of his Age, should have overlooked these strongholds of misrule and tyranny,

Beneath whose battlements, within whose walls,  
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state  
Each robber chief upheld his armed bands,  
Doing his evil will.

Hume speaks of them but as *palaces*, nor does he vouchsafe a hint of their distinctive character, or of their bearing on the history of Europe. — There is another omission in his journal, but this is quite in keeping with his bent of mind. The works of art, the wrecks of past magnificence, that still remain as monuments of human skill and industry, have not so much as a passing mention. They had no attractions for him, nor could he waste a moment of the time he was wont so carefully to



husband, not even of these two years which he sighs over as lost, on so tasteless a subject as Gothic Architecture. Early in the year 1748, and whilst he was on his way to Turin, Hume's Philosophical Essays, afterwards styled 'An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,' were anonymously published in London. Of this publication he observes in his *OWN LIFE*:—"I had always entertained a notion that my want of success in publishing the Treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter; and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion in going to press too early. I therefore cast the first part of that work anew, in the 'Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,' which was published whilst I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification, to find all England in a ferment on account of Dr. Middleton's 'Free Inquiry;' while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected."—Hume had however the satisfaction of having contributed, as he believed, to the progress of philosophy; and this, it is a fair presumption, must have soothed his mortified feelings. The following passage from his introductory Essay, explains the pleasure that he derived from his philosophical pursuits; It is a happy commentary on the Poet's exclamation,

How charming is divine Philosophy!  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

"Were there no advantage," writes the Philosopher, "to be reaped from these studies, beyond the gratification of an innocent curiosity, yet ought not even this to be despised, as being an accession to those few safe and harmless pleasures which are bestowed on the human race. The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of Science and Learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind. And though their researches may appear painful and fatiguing, it is with some minds as with some bodies, which being endowed with vigorous and florid health, require severe exercise, and reap a pleasure from what, to the generality of mankind, may seem burdensome and laborious."—This pleasure will surely account in a more satisfactory manner, for our Author's philosophical pursuits, than the unworthy motive of an unhealthy ambition assigned for them by Blakey: We do not mean to deny Hume's ambition; we have already expressed ourselves very fully on this point: And indeed this passion shows itself in the mortified feelings to which he confesses in his *OWN LIFE*, at the utter neglect of these Essays: But though ambition might have prompted him to publish, and even perhaps to some extent to engage in his philosophical enquiries, we think it ungenerous to deny the concurrent influence of purer motives.

It was Hume's anxious desire that the Inquiry should so completely take the place of his first work, as if this had never been: He wished the Treatise of Human Nature to be regarded as a work blotted out of

Literature. "Henceforth," he says, "the Author desires that the following pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical principles and sentiments."—We have already seen, in connection with his Literary and Moral Essays, how anxious he was to have the world forget that he was the author of the 'Treatise.' It had excited a degree of public indignation, and had brought on him such odium as he would fain escape: By the expedient of recasting his work, and tempering the severity of his speculations, he thought to effect this purpose.—"But it was all in vain: He had to learn that the world takes possession of all that has passed through the gates of the printing press, and that neither the command of despotic authority, nor the solicitations of repentant authorship, can reclaim it, if it be of sterling value.—The bold and original speculations of the 'Treatise' have been, and to all appearance ever will be, part of the intellectual property of man: Great theories have been built upon them, which must be thrown down before we can raze the foundation. That he repented of having published the work, and desired to retract its extreme doctrines, is part of the mental biography of Hume; but it is impossible, at his command, to detach this book from General Literature, or to read it without remembering who was its author."

The fundamental principles of both works are the same, although in the 'Inquiry,' they are not so extensively and so recklessly carried out to all their consequences, as in the former. We have already seen that the enormity of the conclusions which Hume deduced from the principles common to DesCartes, Gassendi, and Locke, first produced doubts of their soundness; and so far must the first work be considered to be of greater service to the cause of truth than the other, for "Hume's premises," as Dr. Reid observes, "often do more than atone for his conclusions." To these very conclusions, which undoubtedly are logical deductions from the premises, does Metaphysics owe her superior advance in after times.—This consequence of his speculations is alluded to by himself, adverting to Reid's Inquiry, (which was communicated to him prior to its publication by their mutual friend Dr. Blair) in a letter to the author:—"If you have been able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise, and shall think that *my errors, by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility.*"

Some of Hume's views are more fully developed in the Inquiry, than in the Treatise, and among these stand prominently forth his doctrine of *Necessity*, the corollary to which is his disquisition on Miracles. We shall not do more than very briefly describe what it was that he maintained on these subjects, believing, as we do, that there is no refutation of these speculations more intelligible or more satisfactory to common sense, than an explicit declaration of them.

Hume held, that as in the natural world cause and effect are inseparable and uniform, so are they in mind. Certain things in the material world produce certain others *ex necessitate*, that is, these follow those as an *inevitable* consequence, by the operation of certain

fixed laws or principles, which are in *the course of nature*,—the *cause* having no *power* to produce the *effect*, in so far as power implies a *voluntary* agency, and is contradistinguished from a necessary operation: So in the human mind certain impulses lead to certain acts, which acts are not regulated or determined by the will, but are *ex necessitate*, the *inevitable* result of the impulse or motive, acting mechanically, according to the course of nature. There is no freedom of will, or what is the same thing, there is no *will*, as a regulating principle in the mind.—This doctrine indeed, it cannot be denied, is at the bottom of Luther's work *De Servo Arbitrio*: It is a logical following out of the principles inculcated by some of the early Reformers, who, in the heat of the theological disputation, did not stop to consider the tendency of such assertions as these—"Est itaque et hoc imprimis necessarium et salutare Christiano nosse, quod Deus nihil præscit contingenter, sed quod omnia incommutabili et æterna infallibilique voluntate et providet, et proponit, et facit. Hoc fulmine sternitur, et conteritur penitus liberum arbitrium."—and "Ex quo sequitur irrefragabiliter, omnia quæ iacimus, etsi nobis videntur mutabiliter et contingenter fieri et fiant, et ita etiam contingenter nobis fiant, reverâ tamen fiunt *necessario*, et *immutabiliter*, si voluntatem Dei spectes" and "Alterum paradoxon: quidquid sit a nobis, non libero arbitrio, sed *natura necessitate* fieri." (*Luther De Servo Arbitrio adv. Erasm*)"—But the philosopher was not disposed to stop at the *Voluntatem Dei*, as did the Divine: He asserted that the *Voluntas Dei* had so ordered the course of nature, as that its operations were now uniform, necessary, and immutable; all our knowledge of His Will being derived from this very *order of nature*, from which indeed it was inseparable, and to which it was bound. The Divine first introduced *necessity*, as binding the *human* will, and the Philosopher extended it to the *Divine Will*, so as to re-assert the *Fatum* of Paganism, and, instead of an intelligent First Cause, whose will, as it called the universe into being, rules and directs it still, he

Makes Nature still encroach upon his plan,  
And shoves him off as far as e'er he can;  
Thrusts some mechanic cause into his place,  
Or binds in matter.

It must be observed that Hume's Theory of Cause and Effect did not leave the phenomena of the Universe without an efficient principle; but it bound up this principle inseparably with *the course of nature*. It acknowledged a ruling, that is, an operative intelligence, but it confined its operation to a *necessary course* of cause and effect, not unlike what the Sankhyâ Philosophy of the Brahmin teaches to be the necessary operation of Intelligence on Matter, from which the universe sprung, and out of which the order of events has its eternal and invariable progression. The ruling principle is, in fact, an Intelligence without a Will, just as the superior essence of Man is asserted by some Theologians to be an intelligence without a will. The inference which Hume deduced from his doctrine of *necessity*, the

\* Sensim irrepit philosophia in Christianismum, et receptum est impium de libero arbitrio dogma. . . Usurpata est vox liberi arbitrii, a divinis literis, a sensu et iudicio spiritus alienissima. . . additum est e Platonia philosophiâ vocabulum rationis æque perniciolosissimum." Melaneth. loc. Theol.

end indeed which it was designed to establish, is "that human actions are as much the objects of inductive philosophy as the operations of nature; that they are equally regular, effect following cause as much in the operations of the passions, as in those of the Elements."\* No one will refuse a modified assent to the conclusion, though we deny the truth of the theory that establishes it. The reader will not expect us here to prove, what we shall take it for granted he is satisfied of, that the freedom of the human will is perfectly compatible with the law of moral sequences, the operation of which determines human actions.

The connection between Hume's theory of *Necessity*, and his Doctrine on Miracles, must have struck the reader from this exposition. A miracle is essentially an event that is contrary to the known laws of nature, and it has been defined to be the result of a temporary suspension of these laws by Him who made them: But the operation of the laws of nature is necessary, and inevitable, and there cannot therefore be any suspension of them: Hence there can be no such thing as a miracle. The theory of necessity recognises no effect without a cause, and as it denies the operation of *Will*, as a cause, it necessarily denies that any effect is possible from the mere will of God, apart from the settled and immutable order and course of nature, which is the only will of God that it recognizes. This theory, it will be observed, is likewise repugnant to that more modern explanation of a miracle, as the natural effect of certain causes put into operation by the will of the Almighty Ruler, in a manner unusual, that is to say without the usual connecting links in the operation between cause and effect, the will of God suddenly and immediately bringing about the effect, by the operation of causes imperceptible to the beholder. The Theory of Necessity requires that the operations of nature shall not only be *necessary*, but *uniform*, and therefore ignores every thing that is not in the *ordinary* course of nature; or that experience does not show to be possible, as disease, or convulsions in the material and moral world, which are thought to come under the ordinary operation of the laws of nature. Having then determined the antecedent improbability of miracles, it became necessary to deal with the positive historic evidence on which they rest; and Hume sets this aside by his famous proposition—"It is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false."—A sophism that applies the test of experience to miracles, on the strength of the theory of necessity, which otherwise, from the very nature of a miracle, is inapplicable.† Were the effect not contrary

\* How very clearly we find these principles practically illustrated in his History! A disinclination to believe in the narratives of great and remarkable deeds, proceeding from peculiar impulses: a propensity, when the evidence adduced in their favour cannot be rebutted, to treat these peculiarities rather as diseases of the mind, than as the operations of noble aspirations: a levelling disposition to find all men pretty much upon a par, and none in a marked manner, better or worse than their neighbours: an inclination to doubt all authorities which tended to prove that the British People had any fundamental liberties, not possessed by the French and other European nations: Such are the practical fruits of this Necessitarian Philosophy.—BURTON.

† There are besides different degrees of experience—"We must not be led away by the narrow application, is common conversation, of the word experience." There is the experience of the common workman, and there is the experience of the philosopher: There is that observation of phenomena, which makes a ditcher know that the difficulty

to their experience to whom the miracle appeals as a proof of Divine power, it would cease to be a miracle. The only question is, must an effect be discredited that is contrary to experience? The philosopher that holds Hume's theory of necessity, cannot but answer the question in the affirmative; whereas the pious mind, that acknowledges an intelligent moral Governor, whose will, as it created all things, now absolutely controls them, in *ordinary* conformity indeed with the laws he has made, but not in *fatal submission* to them, will reverently perceive, and readily acknowledge the finger of God, in miracles that rest upon credible evidence. The assertion that "it is not contrary to experience that testimony should be false," strikes as much against all moral evidence, as it does against the truth of miracles; we say *as much*, because in truth it affects neither the one nor the other. But it is right to observe that the *principle* on which this proposition is founded, is of considerable importance in testing moral evidence. It is a trite maxim that extremes meet; and the extremes of credulity and scepticism are alike repugnant to Truth. From the very nature of moral evidence, it is necessary that the mind should be cautious in its reception; and our experience of the liability of human testimony to be false, acts as a wholesome caution against credulity: But then our experience assures us quite as much, that matters that are assuredly true, rest frequently upon moral evidence alone; and that the truth of human testimony is the foundation not only of by far the greater part of human belief, but of society, and all the relations of life: Hence it follows that though testimony is sometimes false, it is *much oftener true*; and that while our experience of the one should check *credulity*, our experience of the other should counteract *scepticism*. In short, the truth or falsehood of moral evidence depends on the nature of that evidence.

Thus much being premised, it must be candidly allowed that the rule of belief enunciated by Hume is of considerable importance; "as a rule for marking the boundary and proper application of the inductive system, and one that is highly serviceable to science."—And we are the rather disposed to pity his perversion of a just principle, which, it appears, suggested itself to the Philosopher's mind, in combating one of the pretended miracles of the time,—pious frauds, which, in the height of the dispute between Jesuit and Jansenist, each attempted to palm off on the public, in support of their party Dogmas. In a letter to Dr. Campbell, written in relation to a copy of Campbell's 'Dissertation on Miracles,' sent to him by Dr. Blair, Hume observes, "It may perhaps amuse you to learn the first hint which suggested to me that argument which you have so strenuously attacked. I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuits' College of LaFlecho, a town in which I passed two years of my youth, and engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and

of pulling out a loosened stone with a mattock, indicates it to be so many inches thick; and that observation, fully as sure, which shows the geologist that the stratum of the Pennsylvanian grauwacke is upwards of a hundred miles thick. The experience and observation of the husbandman teach him, that when the opposite hill is distinct to his view, the intervening atmosphere is not charged with vapour; but observation, not less satisfactory, shows the astronomer, that Jupiter and the Moon have around them no atmosphere such as that by which our planet is enveloped." It is clear that so very uncertain a test, then, as *experience*, differing in kind and degree, in different men, can never be received as an universal standard of moral evidence.—ED.

learning, who was relating to me, and urging some nonsensical miracle performed lately in their convent, when I was tempted to dispute against him; and as my head was full of the topics of my *Treatise of Human Nature*, which I was at that time composing, this argument immediately occurred to me, and I thought it very much gravelled my companion; but at last he observed to me that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the catholic miracles;—which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer. I believe you will allow that the freedom at least of this reasoning, makes it somewhat extraordinary to have been the produce of a convent of Jesuits; though perhaps you may think that the sophistry of it savours plainly of the place of its birth.”—That human testimony should be received with caution, is a principle that is of the greatest importance to the cause of truth: We readily acknowledge “that in history, in science, in the conduct of every day life, and particularly in the formation of the mind of the young, this rule of belief is of the highest practical-utility. The parish clergyman, who assists in throwing discredit on all the superstitious stories of spectres and witchcraft, and demoniacal possessions, with which his neighbourhood may be afflicted, is but an active promulgator of the doctrine.”—But this circumstance makes us regret the more the sophistry that perverted a right principle; and in its excess directs it to the support of falsehood, and the injury of religion.

In his *Inquiry*, Hume gave the world his simple and beautiful theory on the Association of Ideas, wherein he affirms that there are “only three principles of connection of Ideas, namely, Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect.” In connection with this theory, Coleridge brought against him a strange charge of plagiarism from the commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas, on Aristotle’s *Parva Naturalia*; but there is not the smallest evidence, either external or internal, to support it.

The *Philosophical Essays* soon began to attract attention. Hume says in his *OWN LIFE*, “My bookseller informed me that my publications (all but the unfortunate *Treatise*) were beginning to be the subject of conversation, that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends and Right Reverends came out, two and three in a year; and I found by Warburton’s railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company.” In the collection of Warburton’s “Letters,” there is one to Hurd, where he thus notices the *Philosophical Essays*:—“I am strongly tempted to have a stroke at Hume in passing. He is the author of a little book called ‘*Philosophical Essays*’; in one part of which he argues against the *being of a God*, and in another (very needlessly you will say) against the possibility of miracles. He has crowned the liberty of the press; and yet he has a considerable post under government. I have a great mind to do justice on his arguments against miracles, which, I think, might be done in a few words. But does he deserve notice? Is he known among you? Pray answer these questions: For if his own weight keeps him down, I should be sorry to contribute to his advancement to any place but the pillory.”—

The death of Hume's mother in 1749 (the precise date is not ascertainable) occasioned Hume's return to Ninewells—"I went down," he says, "in 1749, and lived two years with my brother, at his country house, for my mother was now dead."—The Editor of the *Quarterly Review*, alluding to an ill-natured story propagated by the American traveller Silliman, in connection with this sad event, mentions the following circumstance that he found related in the manuscript memoirs of Dr. Carlyle, an eminent clergyman of the Scotch Church, and a friend of Hume's:—"David and he (the Honble. Mr. Boyle, brother of the Earl of Glasgow) were both in London at the period when David's mother died. Mr. Boyle hearing of it, soon after went into his apartment, for they lodged in the same house, where he found him in the deepest affliction, and in a flood of tears. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr. Boyle said to him, "My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion; for if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady, who was not only the best of mothers, but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just." To which David replied, "Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet, in other things, *I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine.*"—If this anecdote be true,—and who would wish it otherwise?—one feels sorely tempted to adopt Blakey's opinion of the motives of Hume's *startling* philosophical speculations, and to believe that his secret convictions were at variance with at least the extreme views set forth in his speculations. Under the influence of a heart-rending grief, his inmost sentiments were wrung from him, and however *little* the philosopher might appear, actuated by vanity to simulate opinions that he did not entertain, better far do we think it for the cause of truth, that Hume should take his place, in respect of moral weakness, as of intellectual vigour, along side of "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind;" than that a mind such as his, should be thought to be insensible to the overwhelming evidences of the Christian Revelation.

We pass over some of the minor incidents of Hume's life, among which the curious reader that consults a more full biography will notice a little *jeu d'esprit* entitled the Bellman's Petition, a parody on the appeal from the Clergy and Schoolmasters of Scotland to the Legislature, for an increase of their income; to notice the domestic arrangements he entered into, consequent upon his brother's marriage in 1751; to which event, he humorously alludes in a letter to a Mrs. D~~...~~, that bears the date of the 19th of March of that year:—"Our friend at last plucked up resolution, and has ventured on that dangerous encounter. He went off on Monday morning; and this is the first action of his life wherein he has engaged himself, without being able to compute exactly the consequences. But what arithmetic will serve to fix the proportion between good and bad wives, and rate the different claims of each? Sir Isaac Newton himself, who could measure the course of the planets, and weigh the earth as in a pair of scales,—even he had not algebra enough to reduce that amiable part of our species to a just equation; and they are the only heavenly bodies whose orbits are as yet uncertain."—We have seen Hume exulting in the possession of a thousand pounds; this was

but an indication of his earnest and long cherished wish to possess an independent livelihood, suitable to one in the middle class of life.—This wish he gives expression to, and describes the happiness he anticipated from its realisation, in the following passage in one of his Essays: “Agar’s prayer is sufficiently noted—‘Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.’—The middle station is here justly recommended, as affording the fullest security for virtue; and I may also add that, it gives opportunity for the most ample exercise of it, and furnishes employment for every good quality which we can possibly be possessed of.” Those who are placed among the lower ranks of men, have little opportunity of exerting any other virtue besides those of patience, resignation, industry, and integrity. Those who are advanced into the higher stations, have full employment for their generosity, humanity, affability, and charity. When a man lies between these two extremes, he can exert the former virtues towards his superiors, and the latter towards his inferiors. Every moral quality which the human soul is susceptible of, may have its turn, and be called up to action; and a man may, after this manner, be much more certain of his progress in virtue, than when his good qualities lie dormant, and without employment.”—After the marriage of his brother, Hume resolved to settle in Edinburgh, the town being, as he observes, “the true scene for a man of letters.” His pecuniary resources are thus detailed by himself in a letter to Michael Ramsay:—“While interest remains as at present, I have 50£ a year, a hundred pounds worth of books, great store of linen and fine clothes, and near 100£ in my pocket.” These, he declares, “along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabating love of study,” make him esteem himself one of the happy and fortunate, so that “there are very few prizes,” he continues, “in the lottery of life, with which I would make an exchange.”—Here then had the philosopher at length obtained that competency, which, as a poor student, compelled to make choice of a profession between that of a merchant’s clerk, and a private tutor, he had so ardently desired.

The “Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals” was published A.D. 1751.—According to Hume’s system, *utility* is the only just criterion of the propriety of action, or of the truth of an Ethical opinion. “Hume,” observes Abercrombie, “seems to refer all our mental impressions to two principles, reason and taste: Reason gives us simply the knowledge of truth or falsehood, and is no *motive* of action. Taste gives an impression of pleasure or pain, and so constitutes happiness or misery, and becomes a *motive* of action. To this he refers our impressions of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. He has accordingly distinctly asserted that the words *right* and *wrong* signify nothing more than *sweet* or *sour*, *pleasant* or *painful*, being only effects upon the mind of the spectator, produced by the contemplation of certain conduct—and this, as we have already seen, resolves itself into the impression of its usefulness.”—The utilitarian system was first broached by Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics: Hume



adopted it, but he did not carry out his theory to its full extent. The 'Inquiry' quite overlooks, for instance, the secondary effects of actions, which have been so shrewdly pointed out by Bentham, as necessary to be taken into account in determining the nature of an action as good or bad, that is as useful or otherwise to mankind. Sir Jas. Mackintosh has noticed two defects, as he terms them, in 'The Inquiry':—"On purity of manners, it must be owned that Hume, though he controverts no rule, yet treats vice with too much indulgence.—It cannot be enough regretted that in an Enquiry written with a very moral purpose, his habit of making truth attractive, by throwing over her the dress of paradox, should have given him, for a moment, the appearance of weighing the mere amusements of society and conversation, against domestic fidelity, which is the preserver of domestic affection, the source of parental fondness and filial regard, and, indirectly, of all the kindness which exists between human beings. That families are Schools where the infant heart learns to love, and that pure manners are the cement which alone holds these schools together, are truths so certain, that it is wonderful he should not have betrayed a stronger sense of their importance. It was singular that he who, in his Essay on *Polygamy and Divorce*, had so well shown the connection of domestic ties with the outward order of society, should not have perceived their deeper and closer relation to all the social feelings of human nature. No one could so well have proved that all the domestic virtues, in their various orders and degrees, minister to the benevolent affections; and that every act that separates the senses from the affections, tends, in some degree, to deprive kindness of its natural auxiliary, and to lessen its prevalence in the world. It did not require his sagacity to discover that the gentlest and tenderest feelings flourish only under the stern guardianship of these severe virtues. Perhaps his philosophy was loosened, though his life was untainted, by that universal and undistinguishing profligacy which prevailed on the Continent, from the Regency of the Duke of Orleans, to the French Revolution—the most dissolute period of European History, at least since the Roman Emperors."—This indulgence shown to impurity, was severely censured by James Balfour, afterwards Professor of Ethics in the University of Edinburgh, in his controversial examination of the 'Inquiry', entitled "A Delineation of the Nature and Obligation of Morality, with reflections on Mr. Hume's Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals."

The other 'speck' that Mackintosh notices, as disfiguring the 'Inquiry', is "the attempt to give the name of virtue, to qualities of the *understanding*." He observes:—"Hume has altogether omitted the circumstance on which depends the difference of our sentiments regarding moral and intellectual qualities. We *admire* intellectual excellence, but we bestow no moral *approbation* on it: Such approbation has no tendency directly to increase it, because it is not voluntary. We morally approve industry, desire of knowledge, love of truth, and all the habits by which the understanding is strengthened and rectified, because their formation is subject to the will:\*" But we do not feel a moral anger against Folly or

\* In hac questione primas tenet Voluntas, qua, ut ait Augustinus, peccatur et recte vivitur (*Hyperaspistes*, *Diatriba adversus Servum Arbitrium*, MARTINI LUTHERI per DESIDERIUM ERASMUM).

Ignorance, because they are involuntary.—Reasonable men apply to every thing which they wish to move, the agent which is capable of moving it;—force to outward substances, arguments to the understanding, and blame, together with all other motives, whether moral or personal, to the *Will* alone. It is as absurd to entertain an abhorrence of Intellectual inferiority or error, however extensive or mischievous, as it would be to cherish a warm indignation against earthquakes or hurricanes. It is singular that a philosopher who needed the most liberal toleration, should, by representing *states of the understanding* as moral or immoral, have offered the most philosophical apology for persecution!

It would be out of place in this Essay, to examine particularly the truth of Hume's Utilitarian Theory.—Mackintosh observes,—"That general utility constitutes a uniform ground of moral distinction, is a part of Mr. Hume's Ethical theory which never can be impugned, until some example can be produced of a virtue generally pernicious, or of a vice generally beneficial."—On the other hand Professor Balfour argued, that the universality of the admission by mankind, in some shape or other, of the leading cardinal virtues, and the unhesitating adoption and practice of them by men on whom the Utilitarian Theory never dawned, and who are quite unconscious that their isolated acts, are the fulfilment of any general or uniform law, is ample evidence that something else than utility must be regarded as the criterion of moral right and wrong." Hume's theory combines the sense of utility with a feeling of approbation, as this criterion; but the question recurs,—On what is this *feeling* of approbation founded? The truth seems to be, as Abercrombie observes, that "virtuous conduct may indeed always contribute to general utility, or general happiness, but this is an *effect* only, not the *cause* or the *principle* which constitutes it virtuous." This important distinction, he continues, has been well stated by Professor Mills of Oxford, who defines Morality to be "an obedience to the law and constitution of man's nature, *assigned him by the Deity, in conformity to his own essential and unchangeable attributes, the effect of which is the general happiness of his creatures.*" In this view of the question, that is attributing our moral sentiments to the *feelings implanted in us by the Creator*, and to the moral sense, which *immediately* discerns right from wrong, by an instantaneous, a ready, and *as it were* an intuitive perception, from the constitution of the human mind;—in this view, we say, we readily subscribe Mackintosh's assertion that "the religious Philosopher, who, with Butler, holds that benevolence must be the actuating principle of the Divine mind, will, with Berkeley, maintain that pure benevolence can prescribe no rules of human conduct but such as are beneficial to men; thus bestowing on the theory of Moral Distinctions the certainty of demonstration, in the eyes of all who believe in God." The reader will observe that this view of the theory of utility makes it the *end* of virtue, as a principle implanted by God in the human mind, which principle, or moral sense, is that which actuates to the *practice* of virtue, the result being the happiness and good of mankind, as the *end* proposed by the benevolent Creator in the moral constitution of his creature. We cannot better conclude our notice of the 'Inquiry,' than in the words of Mackintosh: "Notwithstanding considerable defects, his proof from induction of the beneficial tendency of virtue, his con-

clusive arguments for human disinterestedness, and his decisive observations on the respective provinces of reason and sentiment, in morals, concur in ranking the 'Inquiry' with the ethical treatises of the highest merit in our language—with Shaftesbury's Enquiry concerning Virtue, Butler's Sermons, and Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments."

Hume gives us the following brief account, in his *OWN LIFE*, of this period of his literary history:—"In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my 'Political Discourses,' the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published, in London, my 'Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals;' which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject) is, of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

In the winter of this year, A. D. 1751, Hume was again candidate for an academic chair, that of Professor of Logic in the University of Glasgow. It appears from a letter of his to Dr. Cullen, of the 21st of January, the following year, that this distinguished scientific man assisted Hume in his endeavours to obtain the preferment to which he aspired: But he was unsuccessful, evidently on account of his religious sentiments; for his letter to Dr. Cullen glances at the objection to him on this account, made by "the Reverend Gentlemen" who had the nomination. The successful competitor, the successor of Adam Smith, and the rival of David Hume and Edmund Burke, was a Mr. Crow, who is known only from this chance association of his name with the Literary History of the Age:

Pretty! in amber to observe the forms  
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!  
The things we know are neither rich nor rare,  
But wonder how the devil they got there!

Adverting to this incident in the life of Hume, one of his Biographers observes:—"It is not perhaps to be regretted that Hume failed in both his attempts to obtain a Professor's chair. He was not of the stuff that satisfactory teachers of youth are made of. Although he was beyond all doubt an able man of business, in matters sufficiently important to command his earnest attention, yet it is pretty clear that he had acquired the outward manner of an absent good natured man, unconscious of much that was going on around him; and that he would thus have afforded a butt to the mischief and raillery of his pupils from which all the lustre of his philosophical reputation would not have protected him."—The Biographer of Dr. Cullen, noticing the traditional evidence of Burke's having likewise been a candidate for this chair, says:—"It might afford curious matter of speculation to conjecture what effect the appointment of Mr. Hume or of Mr. Burke to the chair of Logic in Glasgow would have had upon the character of that University, or upon its metaphysical, moral, and political inquiries of the age in which they lived; and what consequences were likely to have resulted from the influence which the peculiar genius and talent of either of these great men, had they been exercised in that sphere, must necessarily have had in forming the minds of such of their pupils as were to be afterwards employed in the pursuits of science, or the conduct and regulation of

human affairs. It seems difficult to conceive how, as instructors of youth, they could either of them, without a considerable modification of their opinions, have taught philosophy upon the sceptical or the Berkleyan system, which they had respectively adopted; while the strict purity of their moral characters, and the great reverence which they both entertained for established institutions, give the fullest assurance that had either of them been appointed to the chair of Logic, their academical duties would have been executed with an unceasing regard to the improvement of their pupils, and to the reputation of the society into which they had been admitted."—Hume would probably, Burton observes, and with truth, have quietly proceeded to inculcate doctrines to which most of his fellow-labourers were averse; and that perhaps, without knowing or feeling that he was in any way departing from the simple routine of duties which the public expected of him. Thus would he probably have created, in the midst of the rising youth of the day, an isolated circle of disciples, taught to despise the acquirements and opinions of their contemporaries, as these contemporaries held theirs in abhorrence.

The following year, A. D. 1752, was published the "Political Discourses," a work that of all others from his pen, obtained the largest share of contemporary popularity.—Brougham, in his *Lives of Men of Letters*, has the following extremely just remarks on this *Essays on Political Economy*:—"Of the Political Discourses it would be difficult to speak in terms of too great commendation. They combine almost every excellence which can belong to such a performance. The reasoning is clear, and unencumbered with more words or more illustrations than are necessary for bringing out the doctrine. The learning is accurate, extensive, and profound, not only as to systems of philosophy, but as to history, whether modern or ancient. The subjects are most happily chosen; the language is elegant, precise, and vigorous; and so admirably are the topics selected, that there is as little of dryness in these five essays, as if the subject were not scientific; and we rise from their perusal, scarce able to believe that it is a work of Philosophy we have been reading, having all the while thought it a book of curiosity and entertainment. The great merit however of these discourses, is their originality, and the new system of Politics and Political Economy which they unfold. Mr. Hume is beyond all doubt the author of the modern doctrines which now rule the world of science, which are to a great extent the guide of practical statesmen, and are only prevented from being applied in their fullest extent to the affairs of nations, by the clashing interests, and the ignorant prejudices of certain powerful classes."—"These discourses are, in truth, the cradle of Political Economy," observes the writer, "and much as that science has been investigated, and added in later times, these earliest, shortest, and simplest developments of its principles, are still read with delight, even by those who are masters of all the literature of this great subject. These essays have the rarely conjoined merit that, as they were the first to direct the way to the true sources of this department of knowledge, those who have gone further, instead of superseding them, have, in the general case, confirmed their accuracy."

The Political Discourses were translated into French, by the Abbe Le Blanc, A. D. 1754: They were very popular, and passed through several editions. The subject of Political Economy had been but little cultivated before this in France; and there can be little doubt but that Hume's Discourses, which were extensively read, first directed attention to the science, and produced the host of writers that appeared after the publication of the translation, until Adam Smith gave the world his masterly work, the 'Wealth of Nations'—the first attempt at any thing like a systematic treatise on the Science of Political Economy.

"In the year 1752," says Hume in his own LIFE, "the faculty of Advocates chose me their librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library."—This appointment, unsolicited by him, coming immediately after his failure in obtaining the chair of Logic at Glasgow, seems to have soothed his wounded pride, and given him very great satisfaction. From his narrative of the circumstances to Dr. Clephane, it is evident that it was a party triumph; and his delight seems to have been the greater, that the "bigots" were defeated, as he terms the religious party. The ladies of Glasgow evinced an unusual concern in the Philosopher's success, an extraordinary circumstance, and interesting, as it evinces a lively appreciation of genius by the sex, which is very much to the credit of the fair partisans.

This appointment was one of great importance to the Historian: He tells us that the works of the finest library in Scotland, thus placed at his command, enabled him to enter upon his long projected History of England; in which he was greatly assisted by the very large body of British Historical Literature, printed and in manuscript, which it contained. The History of the House of Stuart, his first historical work, appears to have been begun this year.—Hume thus explains, in a letter to Adam Smith, his reasons for beginning his History at the accession of James I.—"I confess I was once of the same opinion with you, and thought that the best period to begin an English History was about Henry the Seventh. But you will please to observe, that the change which then happened in public affairs was very insensible, and did not display its influence till many years afterwards. 'Twas under James that the House of Commons began first to raise their head, and then that the quarrel betwixt privilege and prerogative commenced. The Government, no longer oppressed by the enormous authority of the crown, displayed its genius; and the factions which then arose, having an influence on our present affairs, form the most curious, interesting, and instructive part of our history. The preceding events, or causes, may easily be shown, in a reflection or review, which may be artfully inserted in the body of the work; and the whole, by that means, be rendered more compact and uniform." We have the following original sketch of the work, and the motives that influenced him to undertake it, in a letter to Dr. Clephane:—"I have began a work which will employ me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Britain, from the Union of the Crowns, to the present time. I have already finished the reign of King James. My friends flatter me (by this I mean that they don't flatter me) that I have succeeded. You know that there is no post of honour in the English Parnassus, more vacant than that of History:

Style, judgment, impartiality, care, every thing is wanting to our historians; and even Rapin, during this latter period, is extremely deficient. I make my work very concise, after the manner of the ancients. It divides into three very moderate volumes: One to end with the death of Charles the first; the second at the Revolution; the third at the Accession (A. D. 1714) for I dare come no nearer to the present times. The work will neither please the Duke of Bedford, nor James Fraser; but I hope it will please you and posterity." The following remarks in a letter to James Oswald, are too pertinent to be omitted: "The more I advance in my work, the more I am convinced that the History of England has never yet been written; not only for style, which is notorious to all the world, but also for matter; such is the ignorance and partiality of all our historians. Rapin, whom I had an esteem for, is totally despicable. I may be liable to the reproach of ignorance, but I am certain of escaping that of partiality: The truth is, there is so much reason to blame and praise, alternately, King and Parliament, that I am afraid the mixture of both in my composition, being so equal, may pass sometimes for an affectation, and not the result of judgment and evidence."

Towards the close of the year 1754, was published, in a quarto volume of upwards of 450 pages, "The History of Great Britain, vol. I. containing the reigns of James I. and Charles I." Of the reception of this work, one of his Biographers observes: "The general reader found in it a distinct and animated narrative, announced in a style easy, strong, and elegant. The philosopher and statesman found in it profound and original views, such as the author of the Treatise of Human Nature could not wield the pen without occasionally dropping on his page. It was a work at once great in its excellencies and beauties, and great in its defects; yet even the latter circumstance swelled its fame, by producing a host of controversial attacks, conducted by no mean champions. No author or speaker could launch into a defence of monarchical prerogatives, without triumphantly citing the opinion of Hume;—no friend of any popular cause, from Chatham downwards, could appeal to history, without condemning his plausible perversions. No season of a debating Society has ever ended, without the vexed question he has started, being discussed in conjunction with his name. Every newspaper has recorded the Editor's opinion of the tendency of Hume's History. In reviews and magazines, and political pamphlets, the references, laudatory or condemnatory, are still, notwithstanding what has been done for British history in later times, increasing; and some books, of no small bulk, have been written solely against the History, as one pamphlet is written against another." This work soon acquired for Hume the reputation of a popular author;—it soon became, as it were, a necessary of literary life. Our time will not permit us to enter upon a criticism of Hume's History, but we cannot pass over in silence the objection brought against it, of partiality to the House of Stuart; though we must content ourselves with but little more than citing Macaulay's description of this feature of the work. He says, and every candid reader will assent to the justice of the remark:—"Hume, without positively asserting more than he can prove, gives prominence to all the circumstances which can support

his case. He glides lightly over those which are unfavorable to it. His own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Every thing that is offered on the other side, is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice. Concessions even are sometimes made, but this insidious candour only increases the effect of this vast mass of sophistry."—And yet it is inexplicable that a mind such as Hume's, except from sheer love of contradiction, or more probably, from its pernicious habit of sophistry, should support the principles of absolute monarchy, against liberty.—One of his Biographers supposes that his bias in favour of Charles 1st, is to be attributed to the influence of Clarendon's work on his mind; and thinks he can discover in the structure of Hume's narrative, that "Clarendon was the author whose account of the great conflict was chiefly present to his mind; and dwelling on his words and ideas, he must have in some measure felt the influence of that plausible writer."—We fear, however, that the circumstance must remain a literary enigma, except we adopt Blakey's opinion of the peculiar direction of Hume's ambition; and attribute it to his desire to acquire notoriety, by startling public opinion with his strange paradoxes: Or follow up the clue that Jeffrey gives, and suppose that his leaning to Monarchy and High Church, was from a remembrance of the persecutions which he suffered from the Presbyterians.—The last is very probably the true explanation of the phenomenon. Certain it is that there was much in the conduct of the Presbyterian leaders of the Long Parliament, that showed them any thing but patriots, however much the cry of patriotism was on the tongue. "After every allowance has been made," says the judicious Hallam, "he must bring very heated passions to the records of those times, who does not perceive in the conduct of the House of Commons, a series of glaring violations, not only of positive and constitutional, but of those higher principles which are paramount to all immediate policy." Among other instances that he adduces in support of his assertion, he notices "their despotic violation of the rights of the people, in imprisoning those who prepared or presented respectful petitions on behalf of the established Constitution, while they encouraged those of a tumultuous multitude at their bar, in favour of innovation. Their usurpation at once of the judicial and legislative powers, in all that related to the church, particularly by their committees for scandalous ministers, under which denomination, adding reproach to injury, they subjected all who did not reach the puritan standard of perfection, to contumely and vexation; and ultimately to expulsion from their lawful property."—If the Government of Charles was tyrannical, the Government of the Long Parliament was at least quite as much so: If the king exceeded his prerogatives, and encroached upon the rights of the people, the Parliament far outwent the bounds of right, and trampled on the undoubted prerogatives of the Crown: If Charles and his ministers wished to establish Despotism; Pym and his faction quite as resolutely aimed at a Republic. As to the Civil War, which was immediately

brought about by the unconstitutional Militia Bill, the guilt of it must, we fear, to some extent at least, rest with the faction in the House of Commons that had come to be in fact the House. Of this Bill, Hallam observes:—"No one can pretend that it was not an encroachment on the King's prerogative. It can only find justification in the precarious condition, as the Commons asserted it to be, of those liberties they had so recently obtained; in their just persuasion of the King's insincerity; and in the demonstrations he had already made of an intention to win back his authority at the point of the sword. But it is equitable, on the other hand, to observe, that the Commons had by no means greater reason to distrust the faith of Charles, than he had to anticipate fresh assaults from them on the power he had inherited, on the form of religion which alone he thought lawful, on the counsellors who had served him most faithfully, and on the nearest of his domestic ties. If the right of self-defence could be urged by Parliament for this demand of the Militia, must we not admit that a similar plea was equally valid for the King's refusal? However arbitrary and violent the previous government of Charles might have been, however disputable his sincerity at present, it is vain to deny that he had made the most valuable concessions, and such as had cost him very dear. It was not unreasonable for the King to pause at the critical moment which was to make all future denial nugatory; and inquire whether the prevailing majority designed to leave him what they had not taken away."—The probable cause then of Hume's partizan tendencies towards the House of Stuart, seems to be this:—His dislike of the Presbyterians, or as he called them the bigots, was extreme; and under its influence his judgment, strangely liable, for a philosopher, to be warped by prejudice, was led to give undue weight to the unconstitutional proceedings of the House of Commons, and to overlook the tyranny and double-dealing of the King, so as to magnify the circumstances that were connected with the one, and to palliate, and even explain away, those that told against the other. To us this appears the probable cause; but we do not pretend to have solved the enigma.

The effect which the public reception of this 1st vol. of his History had upon Hume, is thus described in his letter to the Earl of Balcarras:—"I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian who had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation: English, Scotch and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullition of their fury was over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me that in a twelve-month he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the Primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the Primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These



dignified Prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged. I was however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been, at that time, breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pluck up courage and to persevere."

The 2nd vol. of the History, bringing down the narrative to the Revolution, was published A. D. 1756. Of this volume he observes in his *OWN LIFE*, "This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother."—In a letter to his publisher, Mr. Millar, written about a twelve month before, we find the following remarks that bear upon the popularity of this volume;—"I have said to all my acquaintance, that if the first volume bore a little of a Tory aspect, the second would probably be as grateful to the opposite party. The two first Princes of the House of Stuart were certainly more excusable than the two second. The Constitution was, in their time, very ambiguous and undetermined; and their Parliaments were, in many respects, obstinate and refractory. But Charles II. knew that he had succeeded to a very limited monarchy. His Long Parliament was indulgent to him, and even consisted almost entirely of royalists: Yet he could not be quiet, nor contented with a legal authority. I need not mention the oppressions in Scotland, nor the absurd conduct of King James II. These are obvious and glaring points. Upon the whole, I wish the two volumes had been published together; neither one party nor the other would, in that case, have had the least pretext of reproaching me with partiality."

The third volume of Hume's History, containing the history of the Tudors, was published A. D. 1759. He says of it in his *OWN LIFE*:—"The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts: The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious."

We cannot stop to institute an enquiry into the correctness of Hume's historical criticisms, or of his views of the English Constitution, and its working under the Tudors and Stuarts: We must content ourselves with referring the student to Hallam's 'History of the British Constitution,' to Brodie's 'History of the British Empire,' or to Allen's 'Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative.' The second of these works in particular, contains an able sifting of Hume's sentiments, and an exposure of his fallacies: We must hasten to the conclusion of this rather protracted notice, simply observing of these volumes of History, that in subsequent editions, he made considerable alterations in them, in the direction of despotic principles. Of these alterations he writes as follows, in his *OWN LIFE*:—"Though I had been taught by experience that the whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the State and in Literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations which further study, reading, or reflection, engaged me to make in the reign of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English Constitution before that period, as a regular plan of liberty."

In a letter to Sir Gilbert Elliot, written in February 1770, he mentions these alterations as follows:—"I am running over again the last edition of my History, in order to correct it still further. I either soften or expunge many villainous, seditious whig strokes, which had crept into it. I wish that my indignation at the present madness, encouraged by lies, calumnies, imposture, and every infamous act usual among popular leaders, may not throw me into the opposite extreme. I am however sensible that the first editions were too full of those foolish English prejudices, which all nations and all ages discover." He alludes here to the Middlesex election disturbance, and to Chatham, whom he heartily hated. The change in his sentiments in favour of absolute monarchy, was further evinced by the suppression of the democratic opinions that were expressed in his early Essays, "*It was part of his nature,*" observes one of his Biographers,—and we believe the observation applies to more than his historical opinions,—"*when popular clamour called for the adoption of a particular course, to turn his steps, for that reason, the more distinctly in the opposite direction.*"—There are at times peculiarities in the constitution even of philosophic minds, that foster prejudice; and the circumstance is painfully humiliating to the pride of human reason!

In the year 1762, were published, in two volumes, the "History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar, to the Accession of Henry VII."—If this portion of the History is the least satisfactory, and least valuable, it should not be forgotten that the field was comparatively unexplored; and that the difficulties to be encountered were such as, in the present state of historic science, can scarcely be appreciated. To Hume belongs however the pre-eminent distinction of being the first English Historian who has included in his narrative of events, an enquiry into the Literature, Arts, Manners and Social Condition of the People.

• In the year 1757, Hume gave to the world Four Dissertations,—on the Natural History of Religion, the Passions, Tragedy, and the Standard of Taste. About this time he wrote two other Essays, on Suicide, and on the Immortality of the Soul, the publication of which he suppressed at the last moment: They were however unfortunately—and there can be no question very improperly—given to the world in 1783, having probably, from some negligence, passed from Millar's hands to others, until their officious Editor published them about seven years after the Author's death. It is satisfactory to know that Hume repented of having written these Essays, and it would be but just to him to let them be forgotten.

In 1760, Macpherson published his "Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language."—Though willing to believe them true, Hume had doubts of their genuineness from the first. Among his Essays in the present selection, will be found one on the authenticity of these Poems; it is a searching examination of them, and a clear exposure of Macpherson's deception.—That Hume never published this Essay, is probably to be attributed to his kindly feelings towards Dr. Blair, who, strange to say, was completely deceived, and asserted the genuineness of these Fragments with considerable warmth.

In the year 1763, Hume went over to France as Secretary to the Eng-

lish Ambassador, Lord Hertford, though not to the Embassy, to which the Ministry had appointed a Mr. Bunbury, against the Ambassador's wishes. Lord Hertford however obtained for Hume a pension for life from the King of 200£ per annum. About two years after, in June 1765, he was officially appointed to the Embassy, on the usual salary of 1200£ a year.

Hume's reception in France was the most gratifying possible.—He writes to his friend Adam Smith, that he was every where received (especially by the Ladies, and the circumstance is very much to their credit) "with the most extraordinary honours, which the most exorbitant vanity could wish or desire."—In France, of all the countries of Christendom, literary merit was then, as it is still, the surest road to distinction.

In one of his letters to his publisher, Andrew Millar, written a few months after his arrival in France, Hume mentions his having discovered the manuscript memoirs of the unhappy James 2<sup>d</sup>, in his own writing, and observes:—"I shall be able to make use of them for improving and correcting many passages of my History, in case of a new edition." These interesting papers are supposed to have been destroyed during the first French Revolution: They would probably have thrown considerable light on the reign of this unfortunate and ill-advised Monarch. It is matter of surprise that they were not published by his widow, the devoted Mary Beatrice, instead of the feeble, inflated, worthless memoir that was prepared at her request, and published at her expense, shortly after the death of James.

When Lord Hertford was appointed, in 1765, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, it was his wish to take Hume over with him as Secretary, but the tide of popular prejudice was at this time so very strong against Scotchmen, that he was reluctantly obliged to forego his purpose. To make up however to the philosopher, he obtained from the King an increase to his pension of 200£. In a letter to his brother, Hume thus relates the circumstance:—"Lord Hertford, on his arrival in London, found great difficulty of executing his intentions in my favour. The cry is loud against the Scots; and the present Ministry are unwilling to support any of our countrymen, lest they bear the reproach of being connected with Lord Bute: For this reason Lord Hertford departed from his project; which he did the more readily, as he knew I had a great reluctance to the office of Secretary for Ireland, which requires a talent for speaking in public, to which I was never accustomed. I must also have kept a kind of open house, have drunk and caroused with the Irish, a course of living to which I am as little accustomed. The Duke of Bedford, to whom I mentioned these objections, thought them very solid. I think myself I present much better provided for, by a pension of 400£ a year for life, which Lord Hertford has procured me. He also writes me, that an apartment is fitting up for me in the castle of Dublin. I shall go thither as soon as I can leave France, which will not be till the end of October, or beginning of November on the arrival of the Duke of Richmond. Meanwhile I am, *Chargé des affaires d'Angleterre à la cour de France*."

We must pass over the circumstances in Hume's life connected with Rousseau: Time will not allow us to do justice to the subject: Suffice it to observe that Rousseau's relation to the English philosopher, and the extraordinary return he made for the greatest attention and kindness

that one man, we shall not say one Author, could possibly show another, but justifies the Poet's description of this strange "self-torturing sophist."

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,  
Or friends by him self-banish'd, for his mind  
Had grown suspicion's sanctuary, and chose  
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind  
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind;  
But he was phrenzied—wherefore, who may know?  
Since cause might be which skill could never find:  
But he *was* phrenzied, by disease or woo,  
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

In 1766 Hume was appointed Under Secretary of State: He held the office until July 1768. In a letter to Dr. Blair, he describes his manner of life at this period as follows:—"My way of life here is very uniform, and by no means disagreeable. I pass all the forenoon in the Secretary's house, from ten till three, where there arrives from time to time, messengers that bring me all the secrets of the kingdom, and indeed of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I am seldom hurried; but have leisure, at intervals, to take up a book, or write a private letter, or converse with any friend that may call for me; and from dinner to bed-time is all my own. If you add to this, that the person with whom I have the chief, if not only transaction, is the most reasonable, equal tempered, and gentleman-like man imaginable; and lady Aylesbury the same, you will certainly think I have no reason to complain: And I am far from complaining. I only shall not regret when my duty is over; because, to me, the situation can lead to nothing, at least in all probability; and reading, and sauntering, and lounging, and doing, which I call thinking, is my supreme happiness.—I mean my full contentment."

- In 1769 the Philosopher and Historian whose reputation had shed such lustre on his country, returned to Scotland, determined to spend the evening of his life in peaceful retirement in his own land, far from the turmoil of public affairs. "I returned to Edinburgh in 1769," he says in his *OWN LIFE*, "very opulent, for I possessed £1,000 a year, healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of long enjoying my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation." Here he lived for six years, endearing himself by his social habits to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. In April 1776 he was induced by his friends to try the waters of Bath for a bilious complaint (which he describes shortly before his death as Diarrhea, or disorder in the bowels) that he was suffering from. The waters at first did him much good, but in about a couple of months his distemper returned with all its usual violence, and he determined to return to his own land, there to die.

On Sunday the 25th of August 1771, this distinguished man breathed his last. We have the following account of his death-bed from his physician Dr. Black, in a letter to Adam Smith:—"The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive; and soon weakened him so much that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued, to the last, perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feeling of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience, but, when he had occasion to

speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak; and he died in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it."—His last resting place is thus described by Burton. "On the declivity of the Calton Hill, there is an old grave yard, which eighty years ago was in the open country beyond the boundary of the City of Edinburgh, and even at the present day, when it is in the centre of a wide circumference of streets and terraces, it has an air of solitude, from its elevated site, and the abrupt rocky banks that separates it from the crowded thoroughfares. There, on a conspicuous point of rock, beneath a circular monument, built after the simple and solemn fashion of the old Roman tombs, lies the dust of David Hume." Peace to his ashes!

Hume's appearance was any thing but prepossessing. Lord Charlemont, the celebrated Irish political leader, thus portrays him, at the age of thirty seven: "Nature, I believe, never formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skilful in that science pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind, in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and flat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his whole person was far better fitted to communicate the idea of a turtle-eating alderman, than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable; so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb." His social character is described by Mackenzie as follows: "The unfortunate nature of his opinions with regard to the theoretical principles of moral and religious truths, never influenced his regard for men who held very opposite sentiments on those subjects; subjects which he never, like some vain and shallow sceptics, introduced into social discourse. On the contrary, when, at any time, the conversation tended that way, he was desirous rather of avoiding any discussion on matters which he wished to confine to the graver and less dangerous consideration of cool philosophy. He had, it might be said in the language which the Grecian historian applies to an illustrious Roman, *two minds*; one which indulged in the metaphysical scepticism which his genius could invent, but which it could not always disentangle; another simple, natural and playful, which made his conversation delightful to his friends, and even frequently conciliated men whose principles of belief, his philosophical doubts, if they had not been too shako, had grieved and offended. During the latter period of his life, I was frequently in his company, amidst persons of genuine piety, and I never heard him venture a remark at which such men, or ladies, still more susceptible than men, could take offence."

It would, we feel, be unpardonable, were we to omit in this place his portrait of himself, given us in his *OWN LIFE*: That he should have attempted such a description, and have left the sketch to posterity, is a fact that is strikingly characteristic of his mental constitution: He writes as follows:—"To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was—(for that is the style I must now use.

in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments)—I was, I say, a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, tho' most men any-wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: And though I *wantonly* exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed, in my behalf, of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: Not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage; but they could never find any, which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained."—To enable the reader the more easily to do so, the testimony of Adam Smith is here subjoined:—"His temper seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantries were the genuine effusion of good nature and good humour, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called *wit* in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not, perhaps, any one of all his great and amiable qualities which contributed more to endear his conversation: And that gaiety of temper so agreeable in society, but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was, in him, certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his life time, and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as, perhaps, the nature of human frailty will permit."—Who can help regretting that such a man should have allowed any circumstance to induce him to write and publish the sceptical notions that one feels sorely tempted to believe only played about his head, and never made any deep impression on his heart? Lady Anne Lindsay, the well-known author of the song

*Auld Robin Gray*, has left us her mother's opinion that "Vanity was Hume's predominant weakness;" and the sex is ever shrewd in penetrating into the character of men:—Who is not disposed to believe that the want of proper religious principles allowed an unhealthy vanity to become the tyrant spirit of his soul; and induced him to seek a wretched popularity, by startling the religious convictions of Christendom.—His vanity, along with that strong perversity that made him delight in running counter to popular sentiments and prepossessions, may well be regarded as the first secret cause of his religious scepticism. The lesson is an awful one to every Christian, of the weakness of human nature; and the absolute need of a divine preventing grace to keep us, that our footsteps slip not! And should not the exemplary life of one who wanted the illumination and assistance that the Christian enjoys, stir us up to vigilance, that we walk worthy of our vocation, and not give room for the reproach that the life of one we are wont to look upon as an infidel, of one that *certainly was not a Christian*, should shame us whose privileges are so many, and obligations so weighty to let our lights shine before men, that they might see our good works, and glorify our Father that is in Heaven?—Let the heathen reader copy so worthy an example of goodness as Hume's character holds out to him; and let the Christian be thereby excited to a glorious fervour, to show how far the morality of the Gospel transcends every Utilitarian Code—How far more powerful are the motives of religion, than any animal impulses and dispositions whatsoever, to urge men to love and to good works! Did this paper lead to so glorious a result in but a single instance, we shall not have written the life of Hume in vain.

We conclude our notice of this great but greatly erring man, with the summary of his intellectual labours that Burton gives in the conclusion of his *Biography*:—"There are few who will now deny that mankind have learned many valuable truths of David Hume. The wide influence of his mind over thought and action, during the last hundred years, is expressed in the mere naming of the systems of which he was the author or suggestor."

His Metaphysical labours gave birth to two great schools of philosophy; The one rising at his own door, endeavoured by powerful and earnest efforts to reconstruct, in a more rational and substantial form, the old system which he had sapped—The other, in a distant land, where new lights of Science had begun to burn, sought to raise mental philosophy from its original elements, purified of the gross and rubbish that had rendered the old materials cumbrous and unsafe, and to endow the whole with fresh life, and a new form and structure.\*

In Ethics, he was the first to make an utilitarian morality assume the aspect of a theoretical system, which it was the task of a great successor, aided by subordinate labourers, to apply to the practical operations of mankind, and to spread widely over the earth.

\* On peut dire que Hume est la fantôme perpétuel de Kant. Dès que la philosophie Allemande est tentée de faire un pas en arrière, dans l'ancienne route, Hume lui apparaît et l'en détourne, et tout l'effort de Kant est de placer la philosophie entre l'ancien dogmatisme et le sensualisme de Locke et de Condillac, à l'abri des attaques du scepticisme de Hume.—Cousin, *Leçons sur la Philosophie de Kant*, 18.

In History, he was the first to divert attention from wars, treaties, and successions, to the living progress of the people, in all that increases their civilization and their happiness. The example thus set, has been the chief service of the "History of England;" yet, with all the faults of its matter, its purely literary merits have been so great, that, as a classical and popular work, it has hitherto encountered no rival.

But his triumphs in Political Economy are those which, in the present day, stand forth with the greatest prominence and lustre. In no long time, a hundred years will have elapsed from the day when Hume told the world, what the Legislature of this country is now declaring, that national exclusiveness in trade, was as foolish as it was wicked: That no nation could profit by stopping the natural flood of commerce between itself and the rest of the world: That commercial restrictions deprive the nations of the earth "*of that free communication and exchange, which the Author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other;*" and that, like the healthy circulation of the blood in living bodies, *Free Trade is the vital principle by which the nations of the earth are to become united in one harmonious whole.* Those who, with a reverential eye, have marked the wonders of the animal structure, and discovered beauty, utility, and harmonious purpose, where presumptuous ignorance has found uselessness or deformity; or have seen the lower animals, each working in its own blind ignorance, gregariously constructing a fabric more perfect, on philosophical principles, than human science;—have thence drawn vivid pictures of the wisdom and goodness with which the world is ordered. May we not extend this harmony to the social economy of the globe, and say that the spirit of activity and enterprise, harmonising with the dispersal of the different bounties of Providence in the distant regions of the globe, are part of the same harmonious system: That the love of commerce, and the desire of aggrandizement, which, in the eye of a narrow philosophy, assume the air of selfish and repulsive passions, represent themselves, when they are left to their legitimate course, as motives implanted in us for the great purposes of securing mutual dependance, and kind offices, and their fruits, peace and good-will, throughout the great family of mankind. To be the first to teach that the earth is not doomed to the eternal curse of rivalry and strife, and to open up so wide a prospect of beneficence, may be an atonement for many errors, and in the eye of good taste, may justify the brief assumption of conscious superiority, in which the subject of this memoir indulged, when he desired that the inscription on his monument should contain only his name, with the year of his birth and of his death—*leaving it to posterity to add the rest.*





## ESSAY I.

---

### OF THE DIGNITY OR MEANNESS OF HUMAN NATURE.

THERE are certain sects, which secretly form themselves in the learned world, as well as factions in the political; and though sometimes they come not to an open rupture, they give a different turn to the ways of thinking of those who have taken part on either side. The most remarkable of this kind are the sects founded on the different sentiments with regard to the *dignity of human nature*: which is a point that seems to have divided philosophers and poets, as well as divines, from the beginning of the world to this day. Some exalt our species to the skies, and represent man as a kind of human demigod, who derives his origin from heaven, and retains evident marks of his lineage and descent. Others insist upon the blind sides of human nature, and can discover nothing, except vanity, in which man surpasses the other animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an author possess the talent of rhetoric and declamation, he commonly takes part with the former: If his turn lie towards irony and ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other extreme.

I am far from thinking, that all those, who have depreciated our species, have been enemies to virtue, and have exposed the frailties of their fellow creatures with any bad intention. On the contrary, I am sensible that a delicate sense of morals, especially when attended with a splenetic temper, is apt to give a man a disgust of the world, and to make him consider the common course of human affairs with too much indignation. I must however, be of opinion, that the sentiments of those, who are inclined to think favourably of mankind, are more advantageous to virtue, than the contrary principles, which give us a mean opinion of our nature. When a man is prepossessed with a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious

action, which might sink him below that figure which he makes in his own imagination. Accordingly we find, that all our polite and fashionable moralists insist upon this topic, and endeavour to represent vice unworthy of man, as well as odious in itself.

We find few disputes, that are not founded on some ambiguity in the expression; and I am persuaded, that the present dispute, concerning the dignity or meanness of human nature, is not more exempt from it than any other. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider, what is real, and what is only verbal, in this controversy.

That there is a natural difference between merit and demerit, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, no reasonable man will deny: Yet it is evident, that in affixing the term, which denotes either our approbation or blame, we are commonly more influenced by comparison than by any fixed unalterable standard in the nature of things. In like manner, quantity, and extension, and bulk, are by every one acknowledged to be real things: But when we call any animal *great* or *little*, we always form a secret comparison between that animal and others of the same species; and it is that comparison which regulates our judgment concerning its greatness. A dog and a horse may be of the very same size, while the one is admired for the greatness of its bulk, and the other for the smallness. When I am present, therefore, at any dispute, I always consider with myself, whether it be a question of comparison or not that is the subject of the controversy; and if it be, whether the disputants compare the same objects together, or talk of things that are widely different.

In forming our notions of human nature, we are apt to make a comparison between men and animals, the only creatures endowed with thought that fall under our senses. Certainly this comparison is favourable to mankind. On the one hand, we see a creature, whose thoughts are not limited by any narrow bounds, either of place or time; who carries his researches into the most distant regions of this globe, and beyond this globe, to the planets and heavenly bodies; looks backward to consider the first origin, at least the history of the human race; casts his eye forward to see the influence of his actions upon posterity, and the judgments which will be formed of his character a thousand years hence; a creature, who traces causes and effects to a great length and intricacy; extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries; corrects his mistakes; and makes his very errors profitable. On the other hand, we are presented with a creature the very reverse of this, limited in its observations and reasonings to a few sensible objects which surround it; without curiosity, without foresight; blindly conducted by instinct, and attaining, in a short time, its utmost perfection.

beyond which it is never able to advance a single step. What a wide difference is there between these creatures ! And how exalted a notion must we entertain of the former, in comparison of the latter !

- There are two means commonly employed to destroy this conclusion ; *First*, By making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weaknesses of human nature. And, *secondly*, By forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom. Among the other excellencies of man, this is one, that he can form an idea of perfections much beyond what he has experience of in himself ; and is not limited in his conception of wisdom and virtue. He can easily exalt his notions, and conceive a degree of knowledge, which, when compared to his own, will make the latter appear very contemptible, and will cause the difference between that and the sagacity of animals, in a manner, to disappear and vanish. Now this being a point, in which all the world is agreed, that human understanding falls infinitely short of perfect wisdom ; it is proper we should know when this comparison takes place, that we may not dispute where there is no real difference in our sentiments. Man falls much more short of perfect wisdom, and even of his own ideas of perfect wisdom, than animals do of man ; yet the latter difference is so considerable, that nothing but a comparison with the former can make it appear of little moment.

It is also usual to *compare* one man with another ; and finding very few whom we can call *wise* or *virtuous*, we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of our species in general. That we may be sensible of the fallacy of this way of reasoning, we may observe, that the honourable appellations of wise and virtuous are not annexed to any particular degree of those qualities of *wisdom* and *virtue* ; but arise altogether from the comparison we make between one man and another. When we find a man, who arrives at such a pitch of wisdom as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise man : So that to say, there are few wise men in the world, is really to say nothing ; since it is only by their scarcity that they merit that appellation. Were the lowest of our species as wise as Tully, or Lord Bacon, we should still have reason to say that there are few wise men. For in that case we should exalt our notions of wisdom, and should not pay a singular honour to any one, who was not singularly distinguished by his talents. In like manner, I have heard it observed by thoughtless people, that there are few women possessed of beauty, in comparison of those who want it ; not considering, that we bestow the epithet of *beautiful* only on such as possess a degree of beauty that is common to them with a few. The

same degree of beauty in a woman is called deformity, which is treated as real beauty in one of our sex.

As it is usual, in forming a notion of our species, to *compare* it with the other species above or below it, or to compare the individuals of the species among themselves; so we often compare together the different motives or actuating principles of human nature, in order to regulate our judgment concerning it. And, indeed, this is the only kind of comparison which is worth our attention, or decides any thing in the present question. Were our selfish and vicious principles so much predominant above our social and virtuous, as is asserted by some philosophers, we ought unflinchingly to entertain a contemptible notion of human nature.

There is much of a dispute of words in all this controversy. When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him. Perhaps he never felt this passion in so clear and distinct a manner as to remove all his doubts concerning its force and reality. But when he proceeds afterwards to reject all private friendship, if no interest or self-love intermix itself; I am then confident that he abuses terms, and confounds the ideas of things; since, it is impossible for any one to be so selfish, or rather so stupid, as to make no difference between one man and another, and give no preference to qualities, which engage his approbation and esteem. Is he also, say I, as insensible to anger as he pretends to be to friendship? And does injury and wrong no more affect him than kindness or benefits? Impossible: He does not know himself: He has forgotten the movements of his heart; or rather, he makes use of a different language from the rest of his countrymen, and calls not things by their proper names. What say you of natural affection? (I subjoin) Is that also a species of self-love? Yes: All is self-love. *Your* children are loved only because they are yours: *Your* friend for a like reason: And *your* country engages you only so far as it has a connection with *yourself*: Were the idea of self removed, nothing would affect you: You would be altogether unactive and insensible: Or, if you ever give yourself any movement, it would only be from vanity, and a desire of fame and reputation to this same self. I am willing, reply I, to receive your interpretation of human actions, provided you admit the facts. That species of self-love, which displays itself in kindness to others, you must allow to have great influence over human actions, and even greater, on many occasions, than that which remains in its original shape and form. For how few are there, having a family, children, and relations, who do not spend more on the maintenance and education of these than on their own pleasure.

This, indeed, you justly observe, may proceed from their self-love, since the prosperity of their family and friends is one, or the chief, of their pleasures, as well their chief honour. Be you also one of these selfish men, and you are sure of every one's good opinion and good will; or, not to shock your ears with these expressions, the self-love of every one, and mine among the rest, will then incline us to serve you, and speak well of you.

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers, that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the *first* place, they found, that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.

In the *second* place, it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vain-glorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. It is very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. The case is not the same with vanity, as with other passions. Where avarice or revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous action, it is difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and it is natural to suppose it the sole actuating principle. But vanity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions, approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture, than any other kinds of affection; and it is almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former. Accordingly, we find, that this passion for glory is always warped and varied according to the particular taste or disposition of the mind on which it falls. Nero had the same vanity in driving a chariot, that Trajan had in governing the empire with justice and ability. To love the glory of virtuous deeds is a sure proof of the love of virtue.

## ESSAY II.

### OF NATIONAL CHARACTERS.

THE vulgar are apt to carry all *national characters* to extremes; and, having once established it as a principle, that any

people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same censure. Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments; though, at the same time, they allow that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours. The common people in Switzerland have probably more honesty than those of the same rank in Ireland; and every prudent man will, from that circumstance alone, make a difference in the trust which he reposes in each. We have reason to expect greater wit and gaiety in a Frenchman than in a Spaniard; though Cervantes was born in Spain. An Englishman will naturally be supposed to have more knowledge than a Dane; though Tycho Brahe was a native of Denmark.

Different reasons are assigned for these *national characters*; while some account for them from *moral*, others from *physical* causes. By *moral* causes, I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which the people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and such like circumstances. By *physical* causes, I mean those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper, by altering the tone and habit of the body, and giving a particular complexion, which, though reflection and reason may sometimes overcome it, will yet prevail among the generality of mankind, and have an influence on their manners.

That the character of a nation will much depend on *moral* causes, must be evident to the most superficial observer; since a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals, and the manners of individuals are frequently determined by these causes. As poverty and hard labour debase the minds of the common people, and render them unfit for any science and ingenious profession; so, where any government becomes very oppressive to all its subjects, it must have a proportional effect on their temper and genius, and must banish all the liberal arts from among them.

The same principle of moral causes fixes the character of different professions, and alters even that disposition, which the particular members receive from the hand of nature. A *soldier* and a *priest* are different characters, in all nations, and all ages; and this difference is founded on circumstances whose operation is eternal and unalterable.

The uncertainty of their life makes soldiers lavish and generous, as well as brave: Their idleness, together with the large societies which they form in camps or garrisons, inclines them to dissipation.

and gallantry : By their frequent change of company, they acquire good breeding and an openness of behaviour : Being employed only against a public and an open enemy, they become candid, honest, and undesigning : And as they use more the labour of the body than that of the mind, they are commonly thoughtless and ignorant\*.

It is a trite, but not altogether a false maxim, that *priests of all religions are the same* ;\* and though the character of the profession will not, in every instance, prevail over the personal character, yet it is sure always to predominate with the greater number. For as chemists observe, that spirits, when raised to a certain height, are all the same, from whatever materials they be extracted ; so these men, being elevated above humanity, acquire a uniform character, which is entirely their own, and which, in my opinion, is, generally speaking, not the most amiable that is to be met with in human society. It is, in most points, opposite to that of a soldier ; as is the way of life, from which it is derived\*.

As to *physical causes*, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular ; nor do I think that men owe any thing of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate. I confess, that the contrary opinion may justly, at first sight, seem probable ; since we find, that these circumstances have an influence over every other animal, and that even those creatures, which are fitted to live in all climates, such as dogs, horses, &c. do not attain the same perfection in all. The courage of bull-dogs and game-cocks seems peculiar to England. Flanders is remarkable for large and heavy horses : Spain for horses light, and of good mettle. And any breed of these creatures, transplanted from one country to another, will soon lose the qualities which they derived from their native climate. It may be asked, why not the same with men ?

There are few questions more curious than this, or which will oftener occur in our inquiries concerning human affairs ; and therefore it may be proper to give it a full examination.

The human mind is of a very imitative nature ; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures ; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclina-

a See NOTE [A.]    b See NOTE [B.]    c See NOTE [C.]

\* Religious belief, of all moral causes, has the greatest influence on character. The character of the Priesthood must therefore depend on the character of the Religion ; and History shows that it does, allowance of course being made for individual temperaments and the influence of adventitious circumstances.—ED.



tions to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasions of their intercourse must be so frequent, for defence, commerce, and government, that, together with the same speech or language, they must acquire a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual. Now, though nature produces all kinds of temper and understanding in great abundance, it does not follow, that she always produces them in like proportions; and that in every society the ingredients of industry and indolence, valour and cowardice, humanity and brutality, wisdom and folly, will be mixed after the same manner. In the infancy of society, if any of these dispositions be found in greater abundance than the rest, it will naturally prevail in the composition, and give a tincture to the national character. Or should it be asserted, that no species of temper can reasonably be presumed to predominate, even in those contracted societies, and that the same proportions will always be preserved in the mixture; yet surely the persons in credit and authority, being a still more contracted body, cannot always be presumed to be of the same character; and their influence on the manners of the people must, at all times, be very considerable. If, on the first establishment of a republic, a Brutus should be placed in authority, and be transported with such an enthusiasm for liberty and public good, as to overlook all the ties of nature, as well as private interest, such an illustrious example will naturally have an effect on the whole society, and kindle the same passion in every bosom. Whatever it be that forms the manners of one generation, the next must imbibe a deeper tincture of the same dye; men being more susceptible of all impressions during infancy, and retaining these impressions as long as they remain in the world. I assert, then, that all national characters, where they depend not on fixed *moral* causes, proceeded from such accidents as these, and that physical causes have no discernible operation on the human mind. It is a maxim in all philosophy, that causes which do not appear, are to be considered as not existing.

If we run over the globe, or revolve the annals of history, we shall discover every where signs of a sympathy or contagion of manners, none of the influence of air or climate.

*First*, We may observe, that where a very extensive government has been established for many centuries, it spreads a national character over the whole empire, and communicates to every part a similarity of manners. Thus the Chinese have the greatest uniformity of character imaginable, though the air and climate, in different parts of those vast dominions, admit of very considerable variations.

*Secondly*, In small governments, which are contiguous, the people have notwithstanding, a different character, and are often as distinguishable in their manners as the most distant nations. Athens and Thebes were but a short day's journey from each other; though the Athenians were as remarkable for ingenuity, politeness, and gaiety, as the Thebans for dulness, rusticity, and a phlegmatic temper. Plutarch, discoursing of the effects of air on the minds of men, observes, that the inhabitants of the Piræus possessed very different tempers from those of the higher town in Athens, which was distant about four miles from the former: But I believe no one attributes the difference of manners in Wapping and St. James's, to a difference of air or climate.

*Thirdly*, The same national character commonly follows the authority of government to a precise boundary; and upon crossing a river or passing a mountain, one finds a new set of manners, with a new government. The Languedocians and Gascons are the gayest people in France; but whenever you pass the Pyrenees, you are among Spaniards. Is it conceivable, that the qualities of the air should change exactly with the limits of an empire, which depend so much on the accidents of battles, negotiations and marriages?

*Fourthly*, Where any set of men, scattered over distant nations, maintain a close society or communication together, they acquire a similitude of manners, and have but little in common with the nations amongst whom they live. Thus the Jews in Europe, and the Armenians in the east, have a peculiar character; and the former are as much noted for fraud, as the latter for probity. The *Jesuits* in all *Roman Catholic countries* are also observed to have a character peculiar to themselves.

*Fifthly*, Where an accident, as a difference in language or religion, keeps two nations, inhabiting the same country, from mixing with each other, they will preserve, during several centuries, a distinct and even opposite set of manners. The integrity, gravity, and bravery of the Turks, form an exact contrast to the deceit, levity, and cowardice of the modern Greeks.

*Sixthly*, The same set of manners will follow a nation, and adhere to them, over the whole globe, as well as the same laws and language. The Spanish, English, French and Dutch colonies, are all distinguishable even between the tropics.

*Seventhly*, The manners of a people change very considerably from one age to another; either by great alterations in their government, by the mixtures of new people, or by that inconsistency, to which all human affairs are subject. The ingenuity

industry, and activity of the ancient Greeks, have nothing in common with the stupidity and indolence of the present inhabitants of those regions. Candour, bravery, and love of liberty, formed the character of the ancient Romans; as subtlety, cowardice, and a slavish disposition, do that of the modern. The old Spaniards were restless, turbulent, and so addicted to war, that many of them killed themselves when deprived of their arms by the Romans.\* One would find an equal difficulty at present (at least one would have found it fifty years ago) to rouse up the modern Spaniards to arms. The Batavians were all soldiers of fortune, and hired themselves into the Roman armies. Their posterity make use of foreigners for the same purpose that the Romans did their ancestors. Though some few strokes of the French character be the same with that which Cæsar has ascribed to the Gauls; yet what comparison between the civility, humanity, and knowledge of the modern inhabitants of that country, and the ignorance, barbarity, and grossness of the ancient? Not to insist upon the great difference between the present possessors of Britain, and those before the Roman conquest; we may observe that our ancestors, a few centuries ago, were sunk into the most abject superstition; last century they were inflamed with the most furious enthusiasm, and are now settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters, that is to be found in any nation of the world.

*Eighthly,* Where several neighbouring nations have a very close communication together, either by policy, commerce, or travelling, they acquire a similitude of manners, proportioned to the communication. Thus all the Franks appear to have a uniform character to the eastern nations. The differences among them are like the peculiar accents of different provinces, which are not distinguishable except by an ear accustomed to them, and which commonly escape a foreigner.

*Ninthly,* We may often remark a wonderful mixture of manners and characters in the same nation, speaking the same language, and subject to the same government: And in this particular the English are the most remarkable of any people that perhaps ever were in the world. Nor is this to be ascribed to the mutability and uncertainty of their climate, or to any other *physical* causes; since all these causes take place in the neighbouring country of Scotland, without having the same effect. Where the government of a nation is altogether republican, it is apt to beget a peculiar set of manners. Where it is altogether monarchical, it is more apt to have the same effect; the imitation of superiors spreading the national manners faster among the people. If the

\* TIT. LIVII, lib. xxxiv. cap. 17.

governing part of a state consist altogether of merchants, as in Holland, their uniform way of life will fix their character. If it consists chiefly of nobles and landed gentry, like Germany, France, and Spain, the same effect follows. The genius of a particular sect or religion is also apt to mould the manners of a people. But the English government is a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The people in authority are composed of gentry and merchants. All sects of religion are to be found among them. And the great liberty and independency, which every man enjoys, allows him to display the manners peculiar to him. Hence the English, of any people in the universe, have the least of a national character; unless this very singularity may pass for such.

If the characters of men depended on the air and climate, the degrees of heat and cold should naturally be expected to have a mighty influence; since nothing has a greater effect on all plants and irrational animals. And indeed there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind. The poverty and misery of the northern inhabitants of the globe, and the indolence of the southern, from their few necessities, may, perhaps, account for this remarkable difference, without our having recourse to *physical* causes. This, however, is certain, that the characters of nations are very promiscuous in the temperate climates, and that almost all the general observations, which have been formed of the more southern or more northern people in these climates, are found to be uncertain and fallacious.

\* Shall we say, that the neighbourhood of the sun inflames the imagination of men, and gives it a peculiar spirit and vivacity? The French, Greeks, Egyptians and Persians, are remarkable for gaiety. The Spaniards, Turks, and Chinese, are noted for gravity and a serious deportment, without any such difference of climate as to produce this difference of temper.

The Greeks and Romans, who called all other nations barbarians, confined genius and a fine understanding to the more southern climates, and pronounced the northern nations incapable of all knowledge and civility. But our island has produced as great men, either for action or learning, as Greece or Italy has to boast of.

It is pretended, that the sentiments of men become more delicate as the country approaches nearer to the sun; and that the taste of beauty and elegance receives proportional improvements

in every latitude; as we particularly observe of the languages, of which the more southern are smooth and melodious, the northern harsh and untunable. But this observation, holds not universally. The Arabic is uncouth and disagreeable: The Muscovite soft and musical. Energy, strength, and harshness, form the character of the Latin tongue: The Italian is the most liquid, smooth, and effeminate language that can possibly be imagined. Every language will depend somewhat on the manners of the people; but much more on that original stock of words and sounds, which they received from their ancestors, and which remain unchangeable, even while their manners admit of the greatest alterations. Who can doubt, but the English are at present a more polite and knowing people than the Greeks were for several ages after the siege of Troy? Yet is there no comparison between the language of Milton and that of Homer. Nay, the greater the alterations and improvements, which happen in the manners of a people, the less can be expected in their language. A few eminent and refined geniuses will communicate their taste and knowledge to a whole people, and produce the greatest improvements; but they fix the tongue by their writings, and prevent, in some degree, its farther changes.

Lord Bacon has observed, that the inhabitants of the south are, in general, more ingenious than those of the north; but that, where the native of a cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be reached by the southern wits. This observation a late writer confirms, by comparing the southern wits to cucumbers, which are commonly all good in their kind; but at best are an insipid fruit: While the northern geniuses are like melons, of which not one in fifty is good; but when it is so, it has an exquisite relish. I believe this remark may be allowed just, when confined to the European nations, and to the present age, or rather to the preceding one: But I think it may be accounted for from moral causes. All the sciences and liberal arts have been imported to us from the south; and it is easy to imagine, that, in the first order of application, when excited by emulation and by glory, the few, who were addicted to them, would carry them to the greatest height, and stretch every nerve, and every faculty, to reach the pinnacle of perfection. Such illustrious examples spread knowledge every where, and beget an universal esteem for the sciences: After which, it is no wonder that industry relaxes; while men meet not with suitable encouragement, nor arrive at such distinction by their attainments. The universal diffusion of learning among a people and the entire banishment of gross ignorance and rusticity, is, therefore, seldom attend-

ed with any remarkable perfection in particular persons. It seems to be taken for granted in the dialogue *de Oratoribus*, that knowledge was much more common in Vespasian's age than in that of Cicero and Augustus. Quintilian also complains of the profanation of learning, by its becoming too common. "Formerly," says Juvenal, "science was confined to Greece and Italy. Now the whole world emulates Athens and Rome. Eloquent Gaul has taught Britain, knowing in the laws. Even Thule entertains thoughts of hiring rhetoricians for its instruction." This state of learning is remarkable; because Juvenal is himself the last of the Roman writers that possessed any degree of genius. Those who succeeded are valued for nothing but the matters of fact of which they give us information. I hope the late conversion of Muscovy to the study of the sciences, will not prove a like prognostic to the present period of learning.

Cardinal Bentivoglio gives the preference to the northern nations above the southern, with regard to candour and sincerity; and mentions, on the one hand, the Spaniards and Italians, and on the other, the Flemings and Germans. But I am apt to think, that this has happened by accident. The ancient Romans seem to have been a candid, sincere people, as are the modern Turks. But if we must needs suppose, that this event has arisen from fixed causes, we may only conclude from it, that all extremes are apt to concur, and are commonly attended with the same consequences. Treachery is the usual concomitant of ignorance and barbarism; and if civilized nations ever embrace subtle and crooked politics, it is from an excess of refinement, which makes them disdain the plain direct path to power and glory.

Most conquests have gone from north to south; and it has hence been inferred, that the northern nations possess a superior degree of courage and ferocity: But it would have been juster to have said, that most conquests are made by poverty and want, upon plenty and riches. The Saracens, leaving the deserts of Arabia, carried their conquests northwards upon all the fertile provinces of the Roman empire; and met the Turks half way, who were coming southwards from the deserts of Tartary.

An eminent writer has remarked, that all courageous animals are also carnivorous, and that greater courage is to be expected in a people, such as the English, whose food is strong and hearty, than in the half-starved commonalty of other countries. But the

a "Sed Cantaber unde

Stoicus, antiqui præsertim ætate Metelli?

Nunc totus Graias, nostrasque habet orbis Athenas.

Gallia caudicibus doctis facunda Britannos:

De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule." SAT. 15.

. . . Sir William Temple's Account of the Netherlands.

Swedes, notwithstanding their disadvantages in this particular, are not inferior, in martial courage, to any nation that ever was in the world.

In general, we may observe, that courage, of all national qualities, is the most precarious; because it is exerted only at intervals, and by a few in every nation; whereas industry, knowledge, civility, may be of constant and universal use, and for several ages may become habitual to the whole people. If courage be preserved, it must be by discipline, example, and opinion. The tenth legion of Cæsar, and the regiment of Picardy in France, were formed promiscuously from among the citizens; but having once entertained a notion, that they were the best troops in the service, this very opinion really made them such.

As a proof how much courage depends on opinion, we may observe, that, of the two chief tribes of the Greeks, the Dorians and Ionians, the former were always esteemed, and always appeared more brave and manly than the latter; though the colonies of both the tribes were interspersed and intermingled throughout all the extent of Greece, tho' Lesser Asia, Sicily, Italy, and the islands of the Ægean Sea. The Athenians were the only Ionians that ever had any reputation for valour or military achievements; though even these were deemed inferior to the Lacedæmonians, the bravest of the Dorians.

The only observation, with regard to the difference of men in different climates, on which we can rest any weight, is the vulgar one, that people in the northern regions have a greater inclination to strong liquors, and those in the southern to love and women. One can assign a very probable *physical* cause for this difference. Wine and distilled waters warm the frozen blood in the colder climates, and fortify men against the injuries of the weather: As the genial heat of the sun, in the countries exposed to his beams, inflames the blood, and exalts the passion between the sexes.

Perhaps, too, the matter may be accounted for by *moral* causes. All strong liquors are rarer in the north, and consequently are more coveted. Diodorus Siculus\* tells us, that the Gauls in his time were great drunkards, and much addicted to wine; chiefly, I suppose, from its rarity and novelty. On the other hand, the heat in the southern climates, obliging men and women to go half naked, thereby renders their frequent commerce more dangerous, and inflames their mutual passion. This makes parents and husbands more jealous and reserved; which still farther in-

\* Lib. v. The same author ascribes taciturnity to that people; a new proof that national characters may alter very much. Taciturnity, as a national character, implies unsociableness. Aristotle, in his Politics, book ii. cap. 2. says, that the Gauls are the only warlike nation who are negligent of women.

flames the passion. Not to mention, that as women ripen sooner in the southern regions, it is necessary to observe greater jealousy and care in their education; it being evident, that a girl of twelve cannot possess equal discretion to govern this passion, with one that feels not its violence till she be seventeen or eighteen. Nothing so much encourages the passion of love as ease and leisure, or is more destructive to it than industry and hard labour; and as the necessities of men are evidently fewer in the warm climates than in the cold ones, this circumstance alone may make a considerable difference between them.

But perhaps the fact is doubtful, that nature has, either from moral or physical causes, distributed their respective inclination to the different climates. The ancient Greeks, though born in a warm climate, seem to have been much addicted to the bottle; nor were their parties of pleasure any thing but matches of drinking among men, who passed their time altogether apart from the fair. Yet when Alexander led the Greeks into Persia, a still more southern climate, they multiplied their debauches of this kind, in imitation of the Persian manners.\* So honourable was the character of a drunkard among the Persians, that Cyrus the younger, soliciting the sober Lacedemonians for succour against his brother Artaxerxes, claims it chiefly on account of his superior endowments, as more valourous, more bountiful, and a better drinker†. Darius Hystaspes made it be inscribed on his tombstone, among his other virtues and princely qualities, that no one could bear a greater quantity of liquor. You may obtain any thing of the Negroes by offering them strong drink; and may easily prevail with them to sell, not only their children, but their wives and mistresses, for a cask of brandy. In France and Italy few drink pure wine, except in the greatest heats of summer; and, indeed, it is then almost as necessary, in order to recruit the spirits, evaporated by heat, as it is in Sweden, during the winter, in order to warm the bodies congealed by the rigour of the season. If jealousy be regarded as a proof of an amorous disposition, no people were more jealous than the Muscovites, before their communication with Europe had somewhat altered their manners in this particular.

But supposing the fact true, that nature, by physical principles, has regularly distributed these two passions, the one to the northern, the other to the southern regions; we can only infer, that the climate may affect the grosser and more bodily organs of our frame, not that it can work on those finer organs, on which the operations of the mind and understanding depend.

\* *Babyloni maxime in vinum, et quæ ebrietatem sequuntur, effusi sunt.* QUINT. CUR. lib. v. cap. 1.

† Plut. Symp. lib. i. quest. 4.



And this is agreeable to the analogy of nature. The races of animals never degenerate when carefully attended to ; and horses, in particular, always show their blood in their shape, spirit, and swiftness : But a coxcomb may beget a philosopher ; as a man of virtue may leave a worthless progeny.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that though the passion for liquor be more brutal and debasing than love, which, when properly managed, is the source of all politeness and refinement ; yet this gives not so great an advantage to the southern climates, as we may be apt, at first sight, to imagine. When love goes beyond a certain pitch, it renders men jealous, and cuts off the free intercourse between the sexes, on which the politeness of a nation will commonly much depend. And if we would subtilize and refine upon this point, we might observe, that the people, in very temperate climates, are the most likely to attain all sorts of improvement ; their blood not being so inflamed as to render them jealous, and yet being warm enough to make them set a due value on the charms and endowments of the fair sex.

## ESSAY III.

### OF THE DELICACY OF TASTE AND PASSION.

SOME people are subject to a certain *delicacy of passion*, which makes them extremely sensible to all the accidents of life, and gives them a lively joy upon every prosperous event, as well as a piercing grief when they meet with misfortunes and adversity. Favours and good offices easily engage their friendship, while the smallest injury provokes their resentment. Any honour or mark of distinction elevates them above measure, but they are as sensibly touched with contempt. People of this character have, no doubt, more lively enjoyments, as well as more pungent sorrows, than men of cool and sedate tempers : But I believe, when every thing is balanced, there is no one, who would not rather be of the latter character, were he entirely master of his own disposition. Good or ill fortune is very little at our disposal ; and when a person, that has this sensibility of temper, meets with any misfortune, his sorrow or resentment takes entire possession of him, and deprives him of all relish in the common occurrences of life, the right enjoyment of which forms the chief part of our happiness. Great pleasures are much less frequent than great pains, so that a sensible temper must meet with fewer trials in the former way than in the latter. Not to mention, that men of such lively passions are apt to be transported beyond all bounds of prudence and

discretion, and to take false steps in the conduct of life, which are often irretrievable.

There is a *delicacy of taste* observable in some men, which very much resembles this *delicacy of passion*, and produces the same sensibility to beauty and deformity of every kind, as that does to prosperity and adversity, obligations and injuries. When you present a poem or a picture to a man possessed of this talent, the delicacy of his feeling makes him be sensibly touched with every part of it; nor are the masterly strokes perceived with more exquisite relish and satisfaction, than the negligences or absurdities with disgust and uneasiness. A polite and judicious conversation affords him the highest entertainment; rudeness or impertinence is as great a punishment to him. In short, delicacy of taste has the same effect as delicacy of passion. It enlarges the sphere both of our happiness and misery, and makes us sensible to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind.

I believe, however, every one will agree with me, that, notwithstanding this resemblance, delicacy of taste is as much to be desired and cultivated, as delicacy of passion is to be lamented, and to be remedied, if possible. The good or ill accidents of life are very little at our disposal; but we are pretty much masters what books we shall read, what diversions we shall partake of, and what company we shall keep. Philosophers have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of every thing external. The degree of perfection is impossible to be *attained*; but every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself; and that is not to be *attained* so much by any other means as by this delicacy of sentiment. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem, or a piece of reasoning, than the most expensive luxury can afford.

Whatever connection there may be originally between these two species of delicacy, I am persuaded, that nothing is so proper to cure us of this delicacy of passion, as the cultivating of that higher and more refined taste, which enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts. A greater or less relish for those obvious beauties, which strike the senses, depends entirely upon the greater or less sensibility of the temper; but with regard to the sciences and liberal arts, a fine taste is, in some measure, the same with strong sense, or at least depends so much upon it that they are inseparable. In order to judge aright of a composition of genius, there are so many views to be taken in, so many circumstances to be compared, and such a knowledge of human nature requisite, that no man, who is not possessed of the soundest judgment, will

ever make a tolerable critic in such performances. And this is a new reason for cultivating a relish in the liberal arts. Our judgment will strengthen by this exercise. We shall form juster notions of life. Many things which please or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our attention; and we shall lose by degrees that sensibility and delicacy of passion, which is so incommodious.

But perhaps I have gone too far, in saying that a cultivated taste for the polite arts extinguishes the passions, and renders us indifferent to those objects, which are so fondly pursued by the rest of mankind. On farther reflection I find, that it rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions.

*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,  
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*

For this, I think, there may be assigned two very natural reasons. In the *first* place, nothing is so improving to the temper as the study of the beauties, either of poetry, eloquence, music, or painting. They give a certain elegance of sentiment to which the rest of mankind are strangers. The emotions which they excite are soft and tender. They draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship.

In the *second* place, a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people, and making us indifferent to the company and conversation of the greater part of men. You will seldom find that mere men of the world, whatever strong sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing characters, or in marking those insensible differences and gradations, which make one man preferable to another. Any one, that has competent sense, is sufficient for their entertainment. They talk to him of their pleasures and affairs, with the same frankness that they would to another; and finding many who are fit to supply his place, they never feel any vacancy or want in his absence. But to make use of the allusion of a celebrated French\* author, the judgment may be compared to a clock or watch, where the most ordinary machine is sufficient to tell the hours; but the most elaborate alone can point out the minutes and seconds, and distinguish the smallest differences of time. One that has well digested his knowledge both of books and men, has little enjoyment but in the company of a few select companions. He feels too sensibly, how much all the

\* Mons. FONTENELLE. *Pluralité des Mondes. Soir 6.*

rest of mankind fall short of the notions which he has entertained. And, his affections being thus confined within a narrow circle, no wonder he carries them further, than if they were more general and undistinguished. The gaiety and frolic of a bottle companion improves with him into a solid friendship; and the ardours of a youthful appetite become an elegant passion.

## ESSAY IV.

### OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE

The great variety of Taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowledge are able to remark a difference of taste in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government, and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those, who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprised at the great inconsistency and contrariety. We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension; but soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self-conceit is at last startled, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiment, to pronounce positively in its own favour.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless inquirer; so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language, which import blame, and others praise; and all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing; and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brilliancy: But when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science, the case is opposite: The difference among men is there oftener found to lie in generals than in particulars; and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explanation of the terms commonly ends the controversy; and the disputants are surprised to find, that they had been quarrelling, while at bottom they agreed in their judgment. Those who found morality on sentiment, more than on reason,

are inclined to comprehend ethics under the former observation, and to maintain, that, in all questions which regard conduct and manners, the difference among men is really greater than at first sight it appears. It is indeed obvious, that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, veracity; and in blaming the opposite qualities. Even poets and other authors, whose compositions are chiefly calculated to please the imagination, are yet found, from Homer down to Fenelon, to inculcate the same moral precepts, and to bestow their applause and blame on the same virtues and vices. This great unanimity is usually ascribed to the influence of plain reason; which, in all these cases, maintains similar sentiments in all men, and prevents those controversies, to which the abstract sciences are so much exposed. So far as the unanimity is real, this account may be admitted as satisfactory: But we must also allow, that some part of the seeming harmony in morals may be accounted for from the very nature of language. The word *virtue*, with its equivalent in every tongue, implies praise; as that of *vice* does blame: And no man, without the most obvious and grossest impropriety, could affix reproach to a term, which in general acceptation is understood in a good sense; or bestow applause, where the idiom requires disapprobation. Homer's general precepts, where he delivers any such, will never be controverted; but it is obvious, that, when he draws particular pictures of manners, and represents heroism in Achilles, and prudence in Ulysses, he intermixes a much greater degree of ferocity in the former, and of cunning and fraud in the latter, than Fenelon would admit of. The sage Ulysses in the Greek poet seems to delight in lies and fictions, and often employs them without any necessity or even advantage: But his more scrupulous son, in the French epic writer, exposes himself to the most imminent perils, rather than depart from the most exact line of truth and veracity.

The admirers and followers of the Alcoran insist on the excellent moral precepts interspersed through that wild and absurd performance. But it is to be supposed, that the Arabic words, which correspond to the English, equity, justice, temperance, meekness, charity, were such as, from the constant use of that tongue, must always be taken in a good sense; and it would have argued the greatest ignorance, not of morals, but of language, to have mentioned them with any epithets, besides those of applause and approbation. But would we know, whether the pretended prophet had really attained a just sentiment of morals, let us attend to his narration; and we shall soon find, that he bestows praise on such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge, bigotry, as are utterly incompatible with civilized society.

No steady rule of right seems there to be attended to; and every action is blamed or praised, so far only as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

The merit of delivering true general precepts in ethics is indeed very small. Whoever recommends any moral virtues, really does no more than is implied in the terms themselves. That people, who invented the word *charity*, and used it in a good sense, inculcated more clearly and much more efficaciously, the précept, *be charitable*, than any pretended legislator or prophet, who should insert such a *maxim* in his writings.\* Of all expressions, those which, together with their other meaning, imply a degree either of blame or approbation, are the least liable to be perverted or mistaken.

It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.

There is a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right; because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may

\* Moral precepts have regard to the infirmity of Human nature: They do not necessarily or usually pre-suppose ignorance of moral obligations; but indifference or insensibility to them: They appeal not so much to the head as to the heart. How general and ready soever the assent may be to maxims of morality, their influence on the conduct of men is alas! but rare. Every-day experience shows, that we need the précept *be charitable*, to be inculcated over and over with every circumstance of solemnity that is calculated to operate as a motive on the moral feelings. All men are not philosophers; and do not so readily apprehend, as philosophers might do, the connection between abstract ideas and moral obligations. The philosophy of language will not move the affections of ordinary men or control their selfishness; it will never, in respect of them at least, supersede the necessity of "general precepts in Ethics."

even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an inquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real-sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter; and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental, as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind, is found, in one instance at least, to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

But though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense; there is certainly a species of common sense, which opposes it, at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to the former authors; no one pays attention to such a taste; and we pronounce, without scruple, the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot, and while we admit it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

It is evident that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings *a priori*, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions, of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they anything but general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry, and even of eloquence, are founded on falsehood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of terms from their natural meaning. To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it would produce a work, which, by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased

by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions: They have possessed other beauties, which were conformable to just criticism; and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. Aristotle pleases; but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind: And however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: It would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blameable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults; let the pleasure which they produce be ever so unexpected and unaccountable.

But though all the general rules of art are founded only on experience, and on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature, we must not imagine, that, on every occasion, the feelings of men will be conformable to these rules. Those finer emotions of the mind are of a very tender and delicate nature, and require the concurrence of many favourable circumstances to make them play with facility and exactness, according to their general and established principles. The least exterior hindrance to such small springs, or the least internal disorder, disturbs their motion, and confounds the operation of the whole machine. When we would make an experiment of this nature, and would try the force of any beauty or deformity, we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition. A perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object; if any of these circumstances be wanting, our experiment will be fallacious, and we shall be unable to judge of the catholic and universal beauty. The relation, which nature has placed between the form and the sentiment, will at least be more obscure; and it will require greater accuracy to trace and discern it. We shall be able to ascertain its influence, not so much from the operation of each particular beauty, as from the durable admiration, which attends those works, that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy.

The same Homer, who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and at London. All the



changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator ; but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle ; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances : But when these obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy ; while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

It appears, then, that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease ; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours ; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature there is a sound and a defective state ; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty ; in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give pleasure, it is not to be expected, that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

One obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that *delicacy* of imagination which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to : Every one talks of it ; and would

reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this essay is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in *Don Quixotte*.

It is with good reason, says Sancho to the Squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: This is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead, which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it; and, after mature reflection, pronounces the wine to be good; were it not for a small taste of leather, which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favour of the wine; but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree, or may be mixed and confounded with each other, it often happens that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact, as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use, being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree: And if the same qualities, in a continued composition, and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition, is like finding the key with the leathern thong; which justified the verdict of Sancho's kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges who had condemned them. Though the hogshead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid: But it would have

been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every bystander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged; the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another: But it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence: He must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse.

It is acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ, and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavours, but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner, a quick and acute perception of beauty, and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste; nor can a man be satisfied with himself while he suspects that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case, the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense of feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both to a man himself and to his friends: But a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality, because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to meet with approbation; and the best way of ascertaining it is to appeal to those models and principles which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages.

But though there be naturally a wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothing tends further to increase and improve this talent, than *practice* in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment which attends them is

obscure and confused ; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellences of the performance, much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed, it is the utmost that can be expected ; and even this judgment, a person so unpractised will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice : He not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects ; and he discerns that very degree and kind of approbation or displeasure which each part is naturally fitted to produce. The mist dissipates which seemed formerly to hang over the object : The organ acquires greater perfection in its operations ; and can pronounce, without danger or mistake, concerning the merits of every performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired by the same means, in the judging of it.

So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that, before we can give judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights with attention and deliberation. There is a flutter or hurry of thought which attends the first perusal of any piece, and which confounds the genuine sentiment of beauty. The relation of the parts is not discerned : The true characters of style are little distinguished. The several perfections and defects seem wrapped up in a species of confusion, and present themselves indistinctly to the imagination. Not to mention, that there is a species of beauty, which, as it is florid and superficial, pleases at first ; but being found incompatible with a just expression either of reason or passion, soon palls upon the taste, and is then rejected with disdain, at least rated at a much lower value.

It is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form comparisons between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other. A man, who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty, is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are

so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person familiarised to superior beauties would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellence of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity: As the most finished object with which we are acquainted is naturally supposed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, and to be entitled to the highest applause. One accustomed to see, and examine, and weigh the several performances, admired in different ages and nations, can alone rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius.

But to enable a critic the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination. We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance. An orator addresses himself to a particular audience, and must have a regard to their particular genius, interests, opinions, passions, and prejudices; otherwise he hopes in vain to govern their resolutions, and inflame their affections. Should they even have entertained some prepossessions against him, however unreasonable, he must not overlook this disadvantage; but, before he enters upon the subject, must endeavour to conciliate their affection, and acquire their good graces. A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. In like manner, when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being, and my peculiar circumstances. A person influenced by prejudice, complies not with this condition, but obstinately maintains his natural position without placing himself in that point of view which the performance supposes. If the work be addressed to persons of a different age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices; but, full of the manners of his own age and country, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated. If the work be executed for the public, he never sufficiently en

larges his comprehension, or forgets his interest as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgotten himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard, and of consequence loses all credit and authority.

It is well known, that in all questions submitted to the understanding, prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: It is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiment of beauty. It belongs to *good sense* to check its influence in both cases; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other, in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please, by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes. Besides, every kind of composition, even the most poetical, is nothing but a chain of propositions and reasonings; not always, indeed, the justest and most exact, but still plausible and specious, however disguised by the colouring of the imagination. The persons introduced in tragedy and epic poetry must be represented as reasoning, and thinking, and concluding, and acting, suitably to their character and circumstances; and without judgment, as well as taste and invention, a poet can never hope to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Not to mention, that the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom or never happens, that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man who has a just taste without a sound understanding.

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give

judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.

But where are such critics to be found? By what marks are they to be known? How distinguish them from pretenders? These questions are embarrassing; and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this essay, we have endeavoured to extricate ourselves.

But if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and inquiry: But that, such a character is valuable and estimable, will be agreed on by all mankind. Where these doubts occur, men can do no more than in other disputable questions which are submitted to the understanding: They must produce the best arguments that their invention suggests to them; they must acknowledge a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.

But, in reality, the difficulty of finding, even in particulars, the standard of taste, is not so great as it is represented. Though in speculation, we may readily avow a certain criterion in science, and deny it in sentiment, the matter is found in practice to be much more hard to ascertain in the former case than in the latter. Theories of abstract philosophy, systems of profound theology, have prevailed during one age: In a successive period these have been universally exploded: Their absurdity has been detected: Other theories and systems have supplied their place, which again gave place to their successors: And nothing has been experienced more liable to the revolutions of chance and fashion than these pretended decisions of science. The case is not the same with the beauties of eloquence and poetry. Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public applause, which they maintain for ever. Aristotle, and Plato, and Epicurus, and Descartes, may successively yield to each other: But Terence and Virgil maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of Cicero has lost its credit: The vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration.

Though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society by the soundness of their understanding, and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing any fine stroke which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the real poet or orator is the cause of some new conversion. And though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment. Thus, though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err, in their affection for a favourite epic or tragic author.

But notwithstanding all our endeavours to fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the discordant apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: Where men vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion in the faculties may commonly be remarked,



proceeding either from prejudice, from want of practice, or want of delicacy; and there is just reason for approving one taste, and condemning another. But where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain degree of diversity in judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.

A young man, whose passions are warm, will be more sensibly touched with amorous and tender images, than a man more advanced in years, who takes pleasure in wise philosophical reflections, concerning the conduct of life and moderation of the passions. At twenty, Ovid may be the favourite author; Horace at forty; and perhaps Tacitus at fifty. Vainly would we, in such cases, endeavour to enter into the sentiments of others, and divest ourselves of those propensities which are natural to us. We choose our favourite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humour and disposition. Mirth or passion, sentiment or reflection; whichever of these most predominates in our temper, it gives us a peculiar sympathy with the writer who resembles us.

One person is more pleased with the sublime; another with the tender; a third with raillery. One has a strong sensibility to blemishes, and is extremely studious of correctness: Another has a more lively feeling of beauties, and pardons twenty absurdities and defects for one elevated or pathetic stroke. The ear of this man is entirely turned towards conciseness and energy; that man is delighted with a copious, rich, and harmonious expression. Simplicity is affected by one; ornament by another. Comedy, tragedy, satire, odes, have each its partisans, who prefer that particular species of writing to all others. It is plainly an error in a critic, to confine his approbation to one species or style of writing, and condemn all the rest: But it is almost impossible not to feel a predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition. Such preferences are innoxious and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard by which they can be decided.

For a like reason, we are more pleased, in the course of our reading, with pictures and characters that resemble objects which are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs. It is not without some effort, that we reconcile ourselves to the simplicity of ancient manners, and behold princesses carrying water from the spring, and kings and heroes dressing their own victuals. We may allow in general, that the representation of such manners is no fault in the author, nor deformity in the piece; but we are not so sensibly touched

with them. For this reason, comedy is not easily transferred from one age or nation to another. A Frenchman or Englishman is not pleased with the *Andria* of Terence, or *Clitæ* of Machiavel; where the fine lady, upon whom all the play turns, never once appears to the spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes, suitably to the reserved humour of the ancient Greeks and modern Italians. A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners; but a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments, as to relish pictures which nowise resemble them.

But here there occurs a reflection, which may, perhaps, be useful in examining the celebrated controversy concerning ancient and modern learning; where we often find the one side excusing any seeming absurdity in the ancients from the manners of the age, and the other refusing to admit this excuse, or at least admitting it only as an apology for the author, not for the performance. In my opinion, the proper boundaries in this subject have seldom been fixed between the contending parties. Where any innocent peculiarities of manners are represented, such as those above mentioned, they ought certainly to be admitted; and a man, who is shocked with them, gives an evident proof of false delicacy and refinement. The poet's *monument more durable than brass*, must fall to the ground like common brick or clay, were men to make no allowance for the continual revolutions of manners and customs, and would admit of nothing but what was suitable to the prevailing fashion. Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors, because of their ruffs and fardingales? But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation, this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the ancient poets, even sometimes by Homer and the Greek tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives modern authors an advantage over them. We are not interested in the fortunes and sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeased to find the limits of vice and virtue so much confounded; and whatever indulgence we may give to the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.

The case is not the same with moral principles as with speculative opinions of any kind. These are in continual flux and re-

volution. The son embraces a different system from the father. Nay, there scarcely is any man, who can boast of great constancy and uniformity in this particular. Whatever speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract but little from the value of those compositions. There needs but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind, from long custom, has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatsoever.

Of all speculative errors, those which regard religion are the most excusable in compositions of genius; nor is it ever permitted to judge of the civility or wisdom of any people, or even of single persons, by the grossness or refinement of their theological principles. The same good sense, that directs men in the ordinary occurrences of life, is not hearkened to in religious matters, which are supposed to be placed altogether above the cognisance of human reason. On this account, all the absurdities of the pagan system of theology must be overlooked by every critic, who would pretend to form a just notion of ancient poetry; and our posterity, in their turn, must have the same indulgence to their forefathers. No religious principles can ever be imputed as a fault to any poet, while they remain merely principles, and take not such strong possession of his heart as to lay him under the imputation of *bigotry* or *superstition*. Where that happens, they confound the sentiments of morality, and alter the natural boundaries of vice and virtue. They are therefore eternal blemishes, according to the principle above mentioned; nor are the prejudices and false opinions of the age sufficient to justify them.\*

\* Man is so constituted that earnest convictions and deep feelings necessarily find expression in action: Hence it is that Religion is the plastic principle of Morals. The grossness thence or refinement of Theological principles must influence the civility and wisdom of a people; and, by consequence, the absurdities of the Pagan System of Theology, alter the natural boundaries of vice and virtue. Hume, but a little before, in fact admits, and History conclusively establishes this truth.

Speculative Notions and Religious Principles should not be confounded: They are essentially different: Those play about the Intellect and have no considerable influence on the conduct; these gain the Heart, and become the ruling principle of action.

It is not true that Religion is altogether above the cognisance of Reason. It is the province of reason to weigh the evidence on which religion rests, as a Revelation from God; and it is the distinctive feature of true religion, that it is so far from being. The votary of a pure Religion bears a two fold testimony to its truth: He sanctifies the Lord God in his heart—the evidence of a pure life; and he is always ready to give an answer to every man that asks him a *reason* of the hope that is in him—the evidence of a reasonable conviction.—Ed.

It is essential to the Roman Catholic religion to inspire a violent hatred of every other worship, and to represent all pagans, mahometans, and heretics, as the objects of divine wrath and vengeance. Such sentiments, though they are in reality very blameable, are considered as virtues by the zealots of that communion, and are represented in their tragedies and epic poems as a kind of divine heroism. This bigotry has disfigured two very fine tragedies of the French theatre, *POLIEUCTE* and *ATHALIA*; where an intemperate zeal for particular modes of worship is set off with all the pomp imaginable, and forms the predominant character of the heroes.\* “What is this,” says the sublime Joad to JOSABET, finding her in discourse with MATHAN the priest of BAAL, “Does the daughter of DAVID speak to this traitor? Are you not afraid, lest the earth should open and pour forth flames to devour you both? Or lest these holy walls should fall and crush you together? What is his purpose? Why comes that enemy of God hither to poison the air, which we breathe, with his horrid presence?” Such sentiments are received with great applause on the theatre of Paris; but at London the spectators would be full as much pleased to hear Achilles tell Agamemnon, that he was a dog in his forehead, and a deer in his heart; or Jupiter threaten Juno with a sound drubbing, if she will not be quiet.

Religious principles are also a blemish in any polite composition, when they rise up to superstition, and intrude themselves into every sentiment, however remote from any connection with religion. It is no excuse for the poet, that the customs of his country had burdened life with so many religious ceremonies and observances, that no part of it was exempt from that yoke. It must for ever be ridiculous in Petrarch to compare his mistress, *LAURA*, to *JESUS CHRIST*. Nor is it less ridiculous in that agreeable libertine, Boccace, very seriously to give thanks to God *ALMIGHTY* and the ladies, for their assistance in defending him against his enemies.

\* That all God's mercies to man are *covenanted mercies*, is undeniable; and it is but reasonable that they should be so: But the solemn, the awful considerations that arise from this dealing of Providence with His Creatures, should awaken the purest benevolence the most fervent charity, “towards them that are without.” Yet the weakness, the perversity of human nature is such, that men of every sect have, more or less, been betrayed into the unseemly assertion of their own modes of worship by hating and persecuting others. Such intemperate zeal is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of the religion of love. However party-feeling might have hurried men away in times past, all sects are now heartily ashamed of the fury of their respective zealots, whose excesses should be buried in mutual oblivion, or charged on the evil passions of men, not on the religion they professed and disgraced.

The introduction of religious matters, especially such as are calculated to inflame religious animosities, into Tragedies and Epic poems, is not a greater literary blemish and an offence against taste, than it is a rank offence against religion.—ED.

## ESSAY V.

## OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT IN WRITING.

FINE writing, according to Mr. Addison, consists of sentiments which are natural, without being obvious. There cannot be a juster and more concise definition of fine writing.

Sentiments, which are merely natural, affect not the mind with any pleasure, and seem not worthy of our attention. The pleasantries of a waterman, the observations of a peasant, the ribaldry of a porter or hackney coachman, all of these are natural and disagreeable. What an insipid comedy should we make of the chit-chat of the tea-table, copied faithfully and at full length? Nothing can please persons of taste, but nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, *la belle nature*; or if we copy low life, the strokes must be strong and remarkable, and must convey a lively image to the mind. The absurd *naïveté* of *Sancho Pança* is represented in such inimitable colours by Cervantes, that it entertains as much as the picture of the most magnanimous hero or the softest lover.

The case is the same with orators, philosophers, critics, or any author who speaks in his own person, without introducing other speakers or actors. If his language be not elegant, his observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct; but he never will be agreeable. It is the unhappiness of such authors, that they are never blamed or censured. The good fortune of a book, and that of a man, are not the same. The secret deceiving path of life, which Horace talks of, *fallentis semita vitæ*, may be the happiest lot of the one; but is the greatest misfortune which the other can possibly fall into.

On the other hand, productions which are merely surprising, without being natural, can never give any lasting entertainment to the mind. To draw chimeras, is not, properly speaking, to copy or imitate. The justness of the representation is lost, and the mind is displeased to find a picture which bears no resemblance to any original. Nor are such excessive refinements more agreeable in the epistolary or philosophic style, than in the epic or tragic. Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production. Uncommon expressions, strong flashes of wit, pointed similes, and epigrammatic turns, especially when they recur too frequently, are a disfigurement, rather than any embellishment of discourse. As the eye, in surveying a Gothic building, is distracted by the multiplicity of ornaments, and loses the whole by its minute attention to the parts; so the mind, in perusing

a work overstocked with wit, is fatigued and disgusted with the constant endeavour to shine and surprise. This is the case where a writer overabounds in wit, even though that wit, in itself, should be just and agreeable. But it commonly happens to such writers, that they seek for their favourite ornaments, even where the subject does not afford them; and by that means have twenty insipid conceits for one thought which is really beautiful.

There is no object in critical learning more copious than this, of the just mixture of simplicity and refinement in writing; and therefore, not to wander in too large a field, I shall confine myself to a few general observations on that head.

*First*, I observe, *That though excesses of both kinds are to be avoided, and though a proper medium ought to be studied in all productions, yet this medium lies not in a point, but admits of a considerable latitude.* Consider the wide distance, in this respect, between Mr. Pope and Lucretius. These seem to lie in the two greatest extremes of refinement and simplicity in which a poet can indulge himself, without being guilty of any blameable excess. All this interval may be filled with poets who may differ from each other, but may be equally admirable each in his peculiar style and manner. Cornille and Congreve, who carry their wit and refinement somewhat farther than Mr. Pope, (if poets of so different a kind can be compared together,) and Sophocles and Terence, who are more simple than Lucretius, seem to have gone out of that medium in which the most perfect productions are found, and to be guilty of some excess in these opposite characters. Of all the great poets, Virgil and Racine, in my opinion, lie nearest the centre, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities.

My second observation on this head is, *That it is very difficult, if not impossible, to explain by words where the just medium lies between the excesses of simplicity and refinement, or to give any rule by which we can know precisely the bounds between the fault and the beauty.* A critic may not only discourse very judiciously on this head without instructing his readers, but even without understanding the matter perfectly himself. There is not a finer piece of criticism than the *Dissertation on Pastorals* by Fontenelle, in which, by a number of reflections and philosophical reasonings, he endeavours to fix the just medium which is suitable to that species of writing. But let any one read the pastorals of that author, and he will be convinced that this judicious critic, notwithstanding his fine reasonings, had a false taste, and fixed the point of perfection much nearer the extreme of refinement than pastoral poetry will admit of. The sentiments of his shepherds are better suited to the toilettes of Paris than to

the forests of Arcadia. But this it is impossible to discover from his critical reasonings. He blames all excessive painting and ornament as much as Virgil could have done, had that great poet wrote a dissertation on this species of poetry. However different the tastes of men, their general discourse on these subjects is commonly the same. No criticism can be instructive which descends not to particulars, and is not full of examples and illustrations. It is allowed on all hands, that beauty, as well as virtue, always lies in a medium; but where this medium is placed is a great question, and can never be sufficiently explained by general reasonings.

I shall deliver it as a *third* observation on this subject, *That we ought to be more on our guard against the excess of refinement than that of simplicity; and that because the former excess is both less beautiful and more dangerous than the latter.*

It is a certain rule, that wit and passion are entirely incompatible. When the affections are moved, there is no place for the imagination. The mind of man being naturally limited, it is impossible that all its faculties can operate at once; and the more any one predominates, the less room is there for the others to exert their vigour. For this reason, a greater degree of simplicity is required in all compositions where men, and actions, and passions are painted, than in such as consist of reflections and observations. And as the former species of writing is the more engaging and beautiful, one may safely, upon this account, give the preference to the extreme of simplicity above that of refinement.

We may also observe, that those compositions which we read the oftenest, and which every man of taste has got by heart, have the recommendation of simplicity, and have nothing surprising in the thought, when divested of that elegance of expression, and harmony of numbers, with which it is clothed. If the merit of the composition lie in a point of wit, it may strike at first; but the mind anticipates the thought in the second perusal, and is no longer affected by it. When I read an epigram of Martial, the first line recalls the whole; and I have no pleasure in repeating to myself what I know already. But each line, each word in Catullus has its merit, and I am never tired with the perusal of him. It is sufficient to run over Cowley once; but Parnell, after the fiftieth reading, is as fresh as at the first. Besides, it is with books as with women, where a certain plainness of manner and of dress is more engaging than that glare of paint, and airs, and apparel, which may dazzle the eye, but reaches not the affections. Terence is a modest and bashful beauty, to whom we grant every thing, because he assumes nothing, and

whose purity and nature make a durable, though not a violent impression on us.

But refinement, as it is the less *beautiful*, so is it the more *dangerous* extreme, and what we are the aptest to fall into. Simplicity passes for dullness, when it is not accompanied with great elegance and propriety. On the contrary, there is something surprising in a blaze of wit and conceit. Ordinary readers are mightily struck with it, and falsely imagine it to be the most difficult, as well as most excellent way of writing. Seneca abounds with agreeable faults, says Quintilian, *abundat dulcibus vitiis*; and for that reason is the more dangerous, and the more apt to pervert the taste of the young and inconsiderate.

I shall add, that the excess of refinement is now more to be guarded against than ever; because it is the extreme which men are the most apt to fall into, after learning has made some progress, and after eminent writers have appeared in every species of composition. The endeavour to please by novelty leads men wide of simplicity and nature, and fills their writings with affectation and conceit. It was thus the Asiatic eloquence degenerated so much from the Attic. It was thus the age of Claudius and Nero became so much inferior to that of Augustus in taste and genius. And perhaps there are, at present, some symptoms of a like degeneracy of taste in France, as well as in England.

## ESSAY VI.

### OF TRAGEDY.

It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle; and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece, is at an end. One scene of full joy and contentment and security is the utmost that any composition of this kind can bear; and it is sure always to be the concluding one. If in the texture of the piece, there be interwoven any scenes of satisfaction, they afford only faint gleams of pleasure, which are thrown in by way of variety, and in order to plunge the actors into deeper distress by means of that contrast and disappointment. The whole art of the poet is employed, in rousing and supporting the compassion and indignation, the anxiety and resentment, of his audience. They are pleased in proportion as they are afflicted, and never are so happy as when they employ tears, sobs, and cries, to give vent to their



sorrow, and relieve their heart, swollen with the tenderest sympathy and compassion.

The few critics who have had some tincture of philosophy, have remarked this singular phenomenon, and have endeavoured to account for it.

L'Abbé Dubos, in his reflections on poetry and painting, asserts, that nothing is in general so disagreeable to the mind as the languid, listless state of indolence, into which it falls upon the removal of all passion and occupation. To get rid of this painful situation, it seeks every amusement and pursuit; business, gaming, shows, executions; whatever will rouse the passions and take its attention from itself. No matter what the passion is; let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered; it is still better than that insipid languor, which arises from perfect tranquility and repose.

It is impossible not to admit this account, as being, at least in part, satisfactory. You may observe, when there are several tables of gaming, that all the company run to those where the deepest play is, even though they find not there the best players. The view, or, at least, imagination of high passions, arising from great loss or gain, affects the spectator by sympathy, gives him some touches of the same passions, and serves him for a momentary entertainment. It makes the time pass the easier with him, and is some relief to that oppression, under which men commonly labour, when left entirely to their own thoughts and meditations.

We find that common liars always magnify, in their narrations, all kind of danger, pain, distress, sickness, deaths, murders, and cruelties; as well as joy, beauty, mirth, and magnificence. It is an absurd secret, which they have for pleasing their company, fixing their attention, and attaching them to such marvellous relations, by the passions and emotions which they excite.

There is, however, a difficulty in applying to the present subject, in its full extent, this solution, however ingenious and satisfactory it may appear. It is certain, that the same object of distress, which pleases in a tragedy, were it really set before us, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness; though it be then the most effectual cure to langour and indolence. Monsieur Fontenelle seems to have been sensible of this difficulty; and accordingly attempts another solution of the phenomenon; at least makes some addition to the theory above mentioned.\*

"Pleasure and pain," says he, "which are two sentiments so different in themselves, differ not so much in their cause.

“From the instance of tickling, it appears, that the movement of pleasure, pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the movement of pain, a little moderate, becomes pleasure. Hence it proceeds, that there is such a thing as a sorrow, soft and agreeable: It is a pain weakened and diminished. The heart likes naturally to be moved and affected. Melancholy objects suit it, and even disastrous and sorrowful, provided they are softened by some circumstance. It is certain, that, on the theatre, the representation has always the effect of reality; yet it has not altogether that effect. However we may be hurried away by the spectacle; whatever dominion the senses and imagination may usurp over the reason, there still lurks at the bottom a certain idea of falsehood in the whole of what we see. This idea, though weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts it into a pleasure. We weep for the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached. In the same instant we comfort ourselves, by reflecting, that it is nothing but a fiction: And it is precisely that mixture of sentiments, which composes an agreeable sorrow, and tears that delight us. But as that affliction, which is caused by exterior and sensible objects, is stronger than the consolation which arises from an internal reflection, they are the effects and symptoms of sorrow, that ought to predominate in the composition.”

This solution seems just and convincing; but perhaps it wants still some new addition, in order to make it answer fully the phenomenon which we here examine. All the passions, excited by eloquence, are agreeable in the highest degree, as well as those which are moved by painting and the theatre. The Epilogues of Cicero are, on this account chiefly, the delight of every reader of taste; and it is difficult to read some of them without the deepest sympathy and sorrow. His merit as an orator, no doubt, depends much on his success in this particular. When he had raised tears in his judges and all his audience, they were then the most highly delighted, and expressed the greatest satisfaction with the pleader. The pathetic description of the butchery, made by Verres of the Sicilian captains, is a masterpiece of this kind: But I believe none will affirm, that the being present at a melancholy scene of that nature would afford any entertainment. Neither is the sorrow here softened by fiction; for the audience were convinced of the reality of every circumstance. What is it, then, which in this case raises a pleasure from the bosom of uneasiness, so to speak; and a pleasure, which still retains all the features and outward symptoms of distress and sorrow?

I answer: This extraordinary effect proceeds from that very eloquence, with which the melancholy scene is represented. The genius required to paint objects in a lively manner, the art employed in collecting all the pathetic circumstances, the judgment displayed in disposing them; the exercise, I say, of these noble talents, together with the force of expression, and beauty of oratorical numbers, diffuse the highest satisfaction on the audience, and excite the most delightful movements. By this means, the uneasiness of the melancholy passions is not only overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole impulse of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us. The same force of oratory, employed on an uninteresting subject, would not please half so much, or rather would appear altogether ridiculous; and the mind, being left in absolute calmness and indifference, would relish none of those beauties of imagination or expression, which, if joined to passion, give it such exquisite entertainment. The impulse or vehemence, arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter, being the predominant motion, seize the whole mind, and convert the former into themselves, at least tincture them so strongly as totally to alter their nature. And the soul being, at the same time, roused by passion, and charmed by eloquence, feels on the whole a strong movement, which is altogether delightful.

The same principle takes place in tragedy; with this addition, that tragedy is an imitation; and imitation is always of itself agreeable. This circumstance serves still farther to smooth the motions of passion, and convert the whole feeling into one uniform and strong enjoyment. Objects of the greatest terror and distress please in painting, and please more than the most beautiful objects that appear calm and indifferent\*. The affection, rousing the mind, excites a large stock of spirit and vehemence; which is all transformed into pleasure by the force of the prevailing movement. It is thus the fiction of tragedy softens the passion, by an infusion of a new feeling, not merely by weakening or diminishing the sorrow. You may by degrees weaken a real sorrow, till it totally disappears; yet in none of its gradations will it ever give pleasure; except, perhaps, by accident, to a man sunk under lethargic indolence, whom it rouses from that languid state.

To confirm this theory, it will be sufficient to produce other instances, where the subordinate movement is converted into the predominant, and gives force to it, though of a different, and even sometimes though of a contrary nature.

\* See NOTE [F.]

Novelty naturally rouses the mind, and attracts our attention; and the movements which it causes are always converted into any passion belonging to the object, and join their force to it. Whether an event excite joy or sorrow, pride or shame, anger or good-will, it is sure to produce a stronger affection, when new or unusual. And though novelty of itself be agreeable, it fortifies the painful, as well as agreeable passions.

Had you any intention to move a person extremely by the narration of any event, the best method of increasing its effect would be artfully to delay informing him of it, and first to excite his curiosity and impatience before you let him into the secret. This is the artifice practised by Iago in the famous scene of Shakespeare; and every spectator is sensible, that Othello's jealousy acquires additional force from his preceding impatience, and that the subordinate passion is here readily transformed into the predominant one.

Difficulties increase passions of every kind; and by rousing our attention, and exciting our active powers, they produce an emotion, which nourishes the prevailing affection.

Parents commonly love that child most whose sickly, infirm frame of body, has occasioned them the greatest pains, trouble, and anxiety, in rearing him. The agreeable sentiment of affection here acquires force from sentiments of uneasiness.

Nothing endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

Jealousy is a painful passion; yet without some share of it, the agreeable affection of love has difficulty to subsist in its full force and violence. Absence is also a great source of complaint among lovers, and gives them the greatest uneasiness: Yet nothing is more favourable to their mutual passion than short intervals of that kind. And if long intervals often prove fatal, it is only because, through time, men are accustomed to them and they cease to give uneasiness. Jealousy and absence in love compose the *dolce piccante* of the Italians, which they suppose so essential to all pleasure.

There is a fine observation of the elder Pliny, which illustrates the principle here insisted on. "It is very remarkable," says he, "that the last works of celebrated artists, which they left imperfect, are always the most prized, such as the *IRIS* of Aristides, the *TYNDARIDES* of Nicomachus, the *MEDea* of Timomachus, and the *VENUS* of Apelles.\* These are valued even above their finished productions. The broken lineaments of the piece, and the half-formed idea of the painter, are carefully studied; and our very grief for that curious hand, which had been stopped by death, is an additional increase to our pleasure."\*

\* Illud vero perquam rarum ac memoria dignum, etiam suprema opera artificum, imper-

These instances (and many more might be collected) are sufficient to afford us some insight into the analogy of nature, and to show us, that the pleasure which poets, orators, and musicians give us, by exciting grief, sorrow, indignation, compassion, is not so extraordinary or paradoxical as it may at first sight appear. The force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of numbers, the charms of imitation; all these are naturally, of themselves, delightful to the mind: And when the object presented lays also hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us, by the conversion of this subordinate movement into that which is predominant. The passion, though perhaps naturally, and when excited by the simple appearance of a real object, it may be painful; yet is so smoothed, and softened, and mollified, when raised by the finer arts, that it affords the highest entertainment.

To confirm this reasoning, we may observe, that if the movements of the imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows; and the former, being now subordinate, is converted into the latter, and still farther increases the pain and affliction of the sufferer.

Who could ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of elocution, the irreparable loss which he has met with by the death of a favourite child? The more power of imagination and expression you here employ, the more you increase his despair and affliction.

The shame, confusion, and terror of Verres, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble eloquence and vehemence of Cicero: So also did his pain and uneasiness. These former passions were too strong for the pleasure arising from the beauties of elocution; and operated, though from the same principle, yet in a contrary manner, to the sympathy, compassion, and indignation of the audience.

Lord Clarendon, when he approaches towards the catastrophe of the royal party, supposes that his narration must then become infinitely disagreeable; and he hurries over the king's death without giving us one circumstance of it. He considers it as too horrid a scene to be contemplated with any satisfaction, or even without the utmost pain and aversion. He himself, as well as the readers of that age, were too deeply concerned in the events, and felt a pain from subjects, which an historian and a reader of another age would regard as the most pathetic and most interesting, and, by consequence, the most agreeable.

An action, represented in tragedy, may be too bloody and

*fectasque tabulas, sicut, IRIN Aristidis, TYNDARIDAS Nicomachi, MEDEAM Timomachi, et quam diximus VENEREM Apellis, in majori admiratione esse quam perfecta. Quippe in his lineamenta reliqua, ipsæque cogitationes artificum spectantur, atque in lenocinio commendationis dolor est manus, cum id ageret, extinctæ. Lib. xxxv, cap. 11:*

atrocious. It may excite such movements of horror as will not soften into pleasure; and the greatest energy of expression, bestowed on descriptions of that nature, serves only to augment our uneasiness. Such is that action represented in the *Ambitious Stepmother*, where a venerable old man, raised to the height of fury and despair, rushes against a pillar, and, striking his head upon it, besmears it all over with mingled brains and gore. The English theatre abounds too much with such shocking images.

Even the common sentiments of compassion require to be softened by some agreeable affection, in order to give a thorough satisfaction to the audience. The mere suffering of plaintive virtue, under the triumphant tyranny and oppression of vice, forms a disagreeable spectacle, and is carefully avoided by all masters of the drama. In order to dismiss the audience with entire satisfaction and contentment, the virtue must either convert itself into a noble courageous despair, or the vice receive its proper punishment.

Most painters appear in this light to have been very unhappy in their subjects. As they wrought much for churches and convents, they have chiefly represented such horrible subjects as crucifixions and martyrdoms, where nothing appears but tortures, wounds, executions, and passive suffering, without any action or affection.\* When they turned their pencil from this ghastly mythology, they had commonly recourse to Ovid, whose fictions, though passionate and agreeable, are scarcely natural or probable enough for painting.

The same inversion of that principle, which is here insisted on, displays itself in common life, as in the effects of oratory and poetry. Raise so the subordinate passion that it becomes the predominant; it swallows up that affection which it before nourished and increased. Too much jealousy extinguishes love. Too much difficulty renders us indifferent: Too much sickness and infirmity disgusts a selfish and unkind parent.

What so disagreeable as the dismal, gloomy, disastrous stories, with which melancholy people entertain their companions? The uneasy passion being there raised alone, unaccompanied with any spirit, genius, or eloquence, conveys a pure uneasiness, and is attended with nothing that can soften it into pleasure or satisfaction.

\* This is not correct. Paintings of the Crucifixion and of Martyrdoms call up the religious feelings of the Christian Spectator. Faith, Hope, Love seize the whole mind and become its predominant affection. The force of this absolute, this prevailing sentiment transforms the other motions of terror and distress into an agreeable sorrow and tears that give the purest delight. Every-day experience shows that such is the effect of religious paintings.

The word mythology is impertinent, except we understand Hume to apply it, as probably he does, to mediæval legends which had early, in his visit to France, given his mind the prejudice against religion that grew to an inveterate and most pernicious habit.—ED.

## ESSAY VII.

## OF ELOQUENCE.

THOSE who consider the periods and revolutions of human kind, as represented in history, are entertained with a spectacle full of pleasure and variety, and see with surprise, the manners, customs and opinions of the same species susceptible of such prodigious changes in different periods of time. It may, however, be observed, that, in *civil* history, there is found a much greater uniformity in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negotiations, and politics of one age, resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles. Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions; and these passions are of a very stubborn and untractable nature, in comparison of the sentiments and understanding, which are easily varied by education and example. The Goths were much more inferior to the Romans in taste and science, than in courage and virtue.

But not to compare together nations so widely different; it may be observed, that even this latter period of human learning is, in many respects, of an opposite character to the ancient; and that, if we be superior in philosophy, we are still, notwithstanding all our refinements, much inferior in eloquence.

In ancient times, no work of genius was thought to require so great parts and capacity, as the speaking in public; and some eminent writers have pronounced the talents, even of a great poet or philosopher, to be of an inferior nature to those which are requisite for such an undertaking. Greece and Rome produced, each of them, but one accomplished orator; and whatever praises the other celebrated speakers might merit, they were still esteemed much inferior to these great models of eloquence. It is observable, that the ancient critics could scarcely find two orators in any age, who deserved to be placed precisely in the same rank, and possessed the same degree of merit. Calvus, Cælius, Curio, Hortensius, Cæsar, rose one above another. But the greatest of that age was inferior to Cicero, the most eloquent speaker that had ever appeared in Rome. Those of fine taste, however, pronounced this judgment of the Roman orator, as well as of the Grecian, that both of them surpassed in eloquence all that had ever appeared, but that they were far from reaching the perfection of their art, which was infinite, and not only exceeded human force to attain, but human imagination to conceive. Cicero declares himself satisfied with his own performances;

nay, even with those of Demosthenes. *Ita sunt avidæ et capaces meæ aures*, says he, *et semper aliquid immensum, infinitumque desiderant.*

Of all the polite and learned nations, England alone possesses a popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. But what has England to boast of in this particular? In enumerating the great men, who have done honour to our country, we exult in our poets and philosophers; but what orators are ever mentioned? or where are the monuments of their genius to be met with? There are found, indeed, in our histories, the names of several, who directed the resolutions of our parliament: But neither themselves nor others have taken the pains to preserve their speeches: and the authority, which they possessed, seems to have been owing to their experience, wisdom, or power, more than to their talents for oratory. At present, there are above half a dozen speakers in the two houses, who, in the judgment of the public, have reached very near the same pitch of eloquence; and no man pretends to give any one the preference above the rest. This seems to me a certain proof, that none of them have attained much beyond a mediocrity in their art; and that the species of eloquence, which they aspire to, gives no exercise to the sublimer faculties of the mind, but may be reached by ordinary talents and a slight application. A hundred cabinet-makers in London can work a table or a chair equally well; but no one poet can write verses with such spirit and elegance as Mr Pope.

We are told, that when Demosthenes was to plead, all ingenious men flocked to Athens from the most remote parts of Greece, as to the most celebrated spectacle of the world.\* At London you may see men sauntering in the court of requests, while the most important debate is carrying on in the two houses; and many do not think themselves sufficiently compensated for the losing of their dinners, by all the eloquence of our most celebrated speakers. When old Cibber is to act, the curiosity of several is more excited, than when our prime minister is to defend himself from a motion for his removal or impeachment.

Even a person, unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge, from a few strokes, that the style or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to. How absurd would it appear, in our temperate and calm speakers, to make use of an *Apostrophe*,

\* Ne illud quidem intelligunt, non modo ita memoriæ proditum esse, sed ita necesse fuisse, cum Demosthenes dicturus esset, ut concursus, audjendi causa ex tota Græcia fierent. At cum isti Attici dicunt, non modo a corona (quod est ipsum miserabile) sed etiam ab advocatis relinquuntur.—*Cicero de Claris Oratoribus.*



like that noble one of Demosthenes, so much celebrated by Quintilian and Longinus, when justifying the unsuccessful battle of Chæroneæ, he breaks out, "No, my fellow-citizens, No: You have not erred. I swear by the *manes* of those heroes, who fought for the same cause in the plains of Marathon and Plataea." Who could now endure such a bold and poetical figure as that which Cicero employs, after describing, in the most tragical terms, the crucifixion of a Roman citizen? "Should I paint the horrors of this scene, not to Roman citizens, not to the allies of our state, not to those who have ever heard of the Roman name, not even to men, but to brute creatures; or, to go farther, should I lift up my voice, in the most desolate solitude, to the rocks and mountains, yet should I surely see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action."\* With what a blaze of eloquence must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace, or cause it to make any impression on the hearers? And what noble art and sublime talents are requisite to arrive, by just degrees, at a sentiment so bold and excessive: To inflame the audience, so as to make them accompany the speaker in such violent passions, and such elevated conceptions; and to conceal, under a torrent of eloquence, the artifice by which all this is effectuated! Should this sentiment even appear to us excessive, as perhaps justly it may, it will at least serve to give an idea of the style of ancient eloquence, where such swelling expressions were not rejected as wholly monstrous and gigantic.

Suitable to this vehemence of thought and expression, was the vehemence of action, observed in the ancient orators. The *supplicio pedis*, or stamping with the foot, was one of the most usual and moderate gestures which they made use of;† though that is now esteemed too violent, either for the senate, bar, or pulpit, and is only admitted into the theatre, to accompany the most violent passions, which are there represented.

One is somewhat at a loss to what cause we may ascribe so sensible a decline of eloquence in latter ages. The genius of mankind, at all times, is perhaps equal: The moderns have applied themselves, with great industry and success, to all the other arts and sciences: And a learned nation possesses a popular government; a circumstance which seems requisite for the full display

\* The original is: "Quod si hæc non ad cives Romanos, non ad aliquos amicos nostræ civitatis, non ad eos qui populi Romani nomen audissent; denique, si non ad homines verum ad bestias; aut etiam, ut longius progrediar, si in aliqua desertissima solitudine, ad saxa et ad scopulos hæc conqueri et deplorare vellem, tamen omnia muta atque inanima, tanta et tam indigna rerum atrocitate commoverentur.—Cic. in Ver.

† Ubi dolor? Ubi ardor animi, qui etiam ex insensuum ingenis elicere voces et querelas solet? nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis: frons non percussa, non femur; pedis (quod minimum est) nulla supplicio. Itaque tantum abfuit ut inflammaretur nostris animos; somnum isto loco vix tenebamus.—Cicero de Claris Oratoribus.

of these noble talents : But notwithstanding all these advantages, our progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable, in comparison of the advances which we have made in all other parts of learning.

Shall we assert, that the strains of ancient eloquence are unsuitable to our age, and ought not to be imitated by modern orators ? Whatever reasons may be made use of to prove this, I am persuaded they will be found, upon examination, to be unsound and unsatisfactory.

*First*, It may be said, that, in ancient times, during the flourishing period of Greek and Roman learning, the municipal laws, in every state, were but few and simple, and the decision of causes was, in a great measure, left to the equity and common sense of the judges. The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and incompatible with every other study or profession. The great statesmen and generals among the Romans were all lawyers ; and Cicero, to shew the facility of acquiring this science, declares, that in the midst of all his occupations, he would undertake, in a few days, to make himself a complete civilian. Now, where a pleader addresses himself to the equity of his judges, he has much more room to display his eloquence, than where he must draw his arguments from strict laws, statutes, and precedents. In the former case, many circumstances must be taken in ; many personal considerations regarded ; and even favour and inclination, which it belongs to the orator, by his art and eloquence, to conciliate, may be disguised under the appearance of equity. But how shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome occupations, in order to gather the flowers of Parnassus ? Or what opportunity shall he have of displaying them, amidst the rigid and subtle arguments, objections and replies, which he is obliged to make use of ? The greatest genius, and greatest orator, who should pretend to plead before the *Chancellor*, after a month's study of the laws, would only labour to make himself ridiculous.

I am ready to own, that this circumstance, of the multiplicity and intricacy of laws, is a discouragement to eloquence in modern times : But I assert, that it will not entirely account for the decline of that noble art. It may banish oratory from Westminster-Hall, but not from either house of Parliament. Among the Athenians, the Areopagites expressly forbade all allurements of eloquence ; and some have pretended, that in the Greek orations, written in the *judiciary* form, there is not so bold and rhetorical a style as appears in the Roman. But to what a pitch did the Athenians carry their eloquence in the *deliberative* kind, when affairs of state were canvassed, and the liberty, happiness, and honour of the republic were the subject of debate ? Disputes of

this nature elevate the genius above all others, and give the fullest scope to eloquence; and such disputes are very frequent in this nation.

*Secondly*, It may be pretended, that the decline of eloquence is owing to the superior good sense of the moderns, who reject with disdain all those rhetorical tricks employed to seduce the judges, and will admit of nothing but solid argument in any debate of deliberation. If a man be accused of murder, the fact must be proved by witnesses and evidence, and the laws will afterwards determine the punishment of the criminal. It would be ridiculous to describe, in strong colours, the horror and cruelty of the action; to introduce the relations of the dead, and, at a signal, make them throw themselves at the feet of the judges, imploring justice, with tears and lamentations: And still more ridiculous would it be, to employ a picture representing the bloody deed, in order to move the judges by the display of so tragical a spectacle; though we know that this artifice was sometimes practised by the pleaders of old\*. Now, banish the pathetic from public discourses, and you reduce the speakers merely to modern eloquence; that is, to good sense, delivered in proper expressions.

Perhaps it may be acknowledged, that our modern customs, or our superior good sense if you will, should make our orators more cautious and reserved than the ancient, in attempting to inflame the passions, or elevate the imagination of their audience: But I see no reason why it should make them despair absolutely of succeeding in that attempt. It should make them redouble their art, not abandon it entirely. The ancient orators seem also to have been on their guard against this jealousy of their audience; but they took a different way of eluding it†. They hurried away with such a torrent of sublime and pathetic, that they left their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow; and then communicated those impetuous movements to his audience.

Does any man pretend to have more good sense than Julius Cæsar? yet that haughty conqueror, we know, was so subdued by the charms of Cicero's eloquence, that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn.

Some objections, I own, notwithstanding his vast success, may lie against some passages of the Roman orator. He is too florid

\* QUINTIL. lib. vi. cap. 1.

† LONGINUS, cap. 15.

and rhetorical : His figures are too striking and palpable : The divisions of his discourse are drawn chiefly from the rules of the schools : And his wit disdains not always the artifice even of a pun, rhyme, or jingle of words. The Grecian addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the Roman senate or judges. The lowest vulgar of Athens, were his sovereigns, and the arbiters of his eloquence\*. Yet is his manner more chaste and austere than that of the other. Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. It is rapid harmony, exactly adjusted to the sense : It is vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art : It is disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument : And, of all human productions, the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection.

*Thirdly*, It may be pretended, that the disorders of the ancient governments, and the enormous crimes, of which the citizens were often guilty, afforded much ampler matter for eloquence than can be met with among the moderns. Were there no Verres or Catiline, there would be no Cicero. But that this reason can have no great influence is evident. It would be easy to find a Philip in modern times ; but where shall we find a Demosthenes ?

What remains, then, but that we lay the blame on the want of genius, or of judgment, in our speakers, who either found themselves incapable of reaching the heights of ancient eloquence, or rejected all such endeavours, as unsuitable to the spirit of modern assemblies ? A few successful attempts of this nature might rouse the genius of the nation, excite the emulation of the youth, and accustom our ears to a more sublime and more pathetic elocution, than what we have been hitherto entertained with. There is certainly something accidental in the first rise and progress of the arts in any nation. I doubt whether a very satisfactory reason can be given, why ancient Rome, though it received all its refinements from Greece, could attain only to a relish for statuary, painting, and architecture, without reaching the practice of these arts : While modern Rome has been excited by a few remains found among the ruins of antiquity, and has produced artists of the greatest eminence and distinction. Had such a cultivated genius for oratory, as Waller's for poetry, arisen during the civil wars, when liberty began to be fully established, and popular assemblies to enter into all the most material points of government ; I am persuaded so illustrious an example would have given a quite different turn to British eloquence, and made us reach the perfection of the ancient model. Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets, geometers, and phi-

\* See NOTE [G.]

losophers; and British Ciceros have appeared, as well as British Archimedeses and Virgils.

It is seldom or never found, when a false taste in poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been preferred to a true, upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models to lead men into a juster apprehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When *these* appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and, by their natural and powerful charms, gain over, even the most prejudiced, to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion, and of every sentiment, is in every man; and, when touched properly, they rise to life, and warm the heart, and convey that satisfaction, by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And, if this observation be true, with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so with regard to eloquence; which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges, but must submit to the public verdict without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent speaker may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective; yet, whenever the true genius arises, *he* draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now, to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational; and, if properly executed, will always have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of any thing better: But the ancients had experience of both; and upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I mistake not, our modern eloquence is of the same style or species with that which ancient critics denominated Attic eloquence, that is, calm, elegant, and subtile, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common discourse. Such was the eloquence of Lysias among the Athenians and of Calvus among the Romans. These were esteemed in their time; but, when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance, and subtilty, and force of argument with the former;

but, what rendered them chiefly admirable, was that pathetic and sublime, which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolution of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarcely had any instance in England, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord Bolingbroke's productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy which our orators scarcely ever aim at; though it is evident that such an elevated style has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. It is there seconded by the graces of voice and action: The movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience: And the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give a propriety to the strongest figures and expressions. It is true, there is a great prejudice against *set speeches*; and a man cannot escape ridicule, who repeats a discourse as a school-boy does his lesson, and takes no notice of any thing that has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity? A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse\*. If any thing new occur, he may supply it from his invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same *impetus* or *force*, which it has acquired by its motion; as a vessel, once impelled by the oars, carries on its course for some time, when the original impulse is suspended.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, even though our modern orators should not elevate their style, or aspire to a rivalry with the ancient; yet is there, in most of their speeches, a material defect, which they might correct, without departing from that composed air of argument and reasoning, to which they limit their ambition. Their great affectation of extemporary discourses has made them reject all order and method, which seems so requisite to argument, and without which it is scarcely possible to produce an entire conviction on the mind. It is not,

\* The first of the Athenians, who composed and wrote his speeches, was Pericles, a man of business and a man of sense, if ever there was one, Πρωτος γραπτον λογον εν διασηριω σιντε, των προ αυτω σχεδιαζοντων Suidas in Περικλης.

that one would recommend many divisions in a public discourse, unless the subject very evidently offer them: But it is easy, without this formality, to observe a method, and make that method conspicuous to the hearers, who will be infinitely pleased to see the arguments rise naturally from one another, and will retain a more thorough persuasion, than can arise from the strongest reasons, which are thrown together in confusion.

## ESSAY VIII.

### OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

NOTHING requires greater nicety, in our inquiries concerning human affairs, than to distinguish exactly what is owing to *chance*, and what proceeds from *causes*; nor is there any subject, in which an author is more liable to deceive himself by false subtleties and refinements. To say, that any event is derived from chance, cuts short all farther inquiry concerning it, and leaves the writer in the same state of ignorance with the rest of mankind. But when the event is supposed to proceed from certain and stable causes, he may then display his ingenuity, in assigning these causes; and as a man of any subtlety can never be at a loss in this particular, he has thereby an opportunity of swelling his volumes, and discovering his profound knowledge, in observing what escapes the vulgar and ignorant.

The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man's sagacity, in considering every particular incident. But, if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following, *What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes; What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes.*

Two natural reasons may be assigned for this rule. *First*, If you suppose a dye to have any bias, however small, to a particular side, this bias, though, perhaps, it may not appear in a few throws, will certainly prevail in a great number, and will cast the balance entirely to that side. In like manner, when any *causes* beget a particular inclination or passion, at a certain time, and among a certain people; though many individuals may escape the contagion, and be ruled by passions peculiar to themselves, yet the multitude will certainly be seized by the common affection, and be governed by it in all their actions.

*Secondly*, Those principles or causes, which are fitted to operate on a multitude, are always of a grosser and more stubborn

nature, less subject to accidents, and less influenced by whim and private fancy, than those which operate on a few only. The latter are commonly so delicate and refined, that the smallest incident in the health, education, or fortune of a particular person, is sufficient to divert their course and retard their operation; nor is it possible to reduce them to any general maxims or observations. Their influence at one time will never assure us concerning their influence at another; even though all the general circumstances should be the same in both cases.

To judge by this rule, the domestic and the gradual revolutions of a state must be a more proper subject of reasoning and observation, than the foreign and the violent, which are commonly produced by single persons, and are more influenced by whim, folly, or caprice, than by general passions and interests. The depression of the lords, and rise of the commons in England, after the statutes of alienation and the increase of trade and industry, are more easily accounted for by general principles, than the depression of the Spanish, and rise of the French monarchy after the death of Charles Quint. Had Henry IV. Cardinal Richelieu, and Louis XIV. been Spaniards; and Philip II. III. and IV. and Charles II. been Frenchmen, the history of these two nations had been entirely reversed.

For the same reason, it is more easy to account for the rise and progress of commerce in any kingdom, than for that of learning; and a state, which should apply itself to the encouragement of the one, would be more assured of success, than one which should cultivate the other. Avarice, or the desire of gain, is an universal passion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all persons: But curiosity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence, and requires youth, leisure, education, genius, and example, to make it govern any person. You will never want booksellers, while there are buyers of books: But there may frequently be readers where there are no authors. Multitudes of people, necessity, and liberty, have begotten commerce in Holland: But study and application have scarcely produced any eminent writers.

We may, therefore, conclude, that there is no subject, in which we must proceed with more caution, than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences; lest we assign causes which never existed, and reduce what is merely contingent to stable and universal principles. Those who cultivate the sciences in any state, are always few in number: The passion, which governs them, is limited: Their taste and judgment delicate and easily perverted: And their application disturbed with the smallest accident. Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts.



But there is a reason, which induces me not to ascribe the matter altogether to chance. Though the persons, who cultivate the sciences with such astonishing success, as to attract the admiration of posterity, be always few, in all nations and all ages; it is impossible but a share of the same spirit and genius must be antecedently diffused through the people among whom they arise, in order to produce, form, and cultivate, from their earliest infancy, the taste and judgment of those eminent writers. The mass cannot be altogether insipid, from which such refined spirits are extracted. *There is a God within us*, says Ovid, *who breathes that divine fire, by which we are animated*.\* Poets in all ages have advanced this claim to inspiration. There is not, however, any thing supernatural in the case. Their fire is not kindled from heaven. It only runs along the earth; is caught from one breast to another; and burns brightest, where the materials are best prepared, and most happily disposed. The question, therefore, concerning the rise and progress of the arts and sciences is not altogether a question concerning the taste, genius, and spirit of a few, but concerning those of a whole people; and may, therefore be accounted for, in some measure, by general causes and principles. I grant, that a man, who should inquire, why such a particular poet, as Homer, for instance, existed, at such a place, in such a time, would throw himself headlong into chimæra, and could never treat of such a subject, without a multitude of false subtleties and refinements. He might as well pretend to give a reason, why such particular generals, as Fabius and Scipio, lived in Rome at such a time, and why Fabius came into the world before Scipio. For such incidents as these, no other reason can be given than that of Horace :

Scit genius, natale comes, qui temperat astrum,  
Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum ———  
—— Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus et ater.

But I am persuaded, that in many cases good reasons might be given, why such a nation is more polite and learned, at a particular time, than any of its neighbours. At least, this is so curious a subject, that it were a pity to abandon it entirely, before we have found whether it be susceptible of reasoning, and can be reduced to any general principles.

My first observation on this head is, *That it is impossible for the arts and sciences to arise, at first, among any people, unless that people enjoy the blessing of a free government.*

In the first ages of the world, when men are as yet barbarous and ignorant, they seek no farther security against mutual

\* Est Deus in nobis ; agitante calescimus illo :  
Impetus hic, sacræ semina mentis habet. OVID. *Fast. lib. 1.*

violence and injustice, than the choice of some rulers, few or many, in whom they place an implicit confidence, without providing any security, by laws or political institutions, against the violence and injustice of these rulers. If the authority be centered in a single person, and if the people, either by conquest, or by the ordinary course of propagation, increase to a great multitude, the monarch, finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty, in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates, who preserve peace and order in their respective districts. As experience and education have not yet refined the judgments of men to any considerable degree, the prince, who is himself unrestrained, never dreams of restraining his ministers, but delegates his full authority to every one, whom he sets over any portion of the people. All general laws are attended with inconveniences, when applied to particular cases; and it requires great penetration and experience, both to perceive that these inconveniences are fewer than what result from full discretionary powers, in every magistrate, and also to discern what general laws are, upon the whole, attended with fewest inconveniences. This is a matter of so great difficulty, that men may have made some advances, even in the sublime arts of poetry and eloquence, where a rapidity of genius and imagination assists their progress, before they have arrived at any great refinement in their municipal laws, where frequent trials and diligent observation can alone direct their improvements. It is not, therefore, to be supposed, that a barbarous monarch, unrestrained and uninstructed, will ever become a legislator, or think of restraining his *Bashaws*, in every province, or even his *Cadis*, in every village. We are told, that the late *Czar*, though actuated with a noble genius, and smit with the love and admiration of European arts; yet professed an esteem for the Turkish policy in this particular, and approved of such summary decisions of causes, as are practised in that barbarous monarchy, where the judges are not restrained by any methods, forms, or laws. He did not perceive, how contrary such a practice would have been to all his other endeavours for refining his people. Arbitrary power, in all cases, is somewhat oppressive and debasing; but it is altogether ruinous and intolerable, when contracted into a small compass; and becomes still worse, when the person who possesses it, knows that the time of his authority is limited and uncertain: *Habet subjectos tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos*.\* He governs the subjects with full authority, as if they were his own; and with negligence or tyranny, as belonging to another. A people, governed after such a manner, are slaves in the full and

\* TACIT. Hist. lib. i.

proper sense of the word ; and it is impossible they can ever aspire to any refinements of taste or reason. They dare not so much as pretend to enjoy the necessities of life in plenty or security.

To expect, therefore, that the arts and sciences should take their first rise in a monarchy, is to expect a contradiction. Before these refinements have taken place, the monarch is ignorant and uninstructed ; and not having knowledge sufficient to make him sensible of the necessity of balancing his government upon general laws, he delegates his full power to all inferior magistrates. This barbarous policy debases the people, and for ever prevents all improvements. Were it possible, that, before science were known in the world, a monarch could possess so much wisdom as to become a legislator, and govern his people by law, not by the arbitrary will of their fellow-subjects, it might be possible for that species of government to be the first nursery of arts and sciences. But that supposition seems scarcely to be consistent or rational.

It may happen, that a republic, in its infant state, may be supported by as few laws as a barbarous monarchy, and may entrust as unlimited an authority to its magistrates or judges. But, besides that the frequent elections by the people are a considerable check upon authority ; it is impossible, but in time, the necessity of restraining the magistrates, in order to preserve liberty, must at last appear, and give rise to general laws and statutes. The Roman Consuls, for some time decided all causes, without being confined by any positive statutes, till the people, bearing this yoke with impatience, created the *decemvirs*, who promulgated the *twelve tables* ; a body of laws, which, though, perhaps, they were not equal in bulk to one English act of parliament, were almost the only written rules, which regulated property and punishment, for some ages, in that famous republic. They were, however, sufficient, together with the forms of a free government, to secure the lives and properties of the citizens ; to exempt one man from the dominion of another ; and to protect every one against the violence or tyranny of his fellow-citizens. In such a situation the sciences may raise their heads and flourish ; but never can have being amidst such a scene of oppression and slavery, as always results from barbarous monarchies, where the people alone are restrained by the authority of the magistrates, and the magistrates are not restrained by any law or statute. An unlimited despotism of this nature, while it exists, effectually puts a stop to improvements, and keeps men from attaining that knowledge which is requisite to instruct them in the advantages arising from a better police, and more moderate authority.

Here then are the advantages of free states. Though a republic should be barbarous, it necessarily, by an infallible operation

gives rise to Law, even before mankind have made any considerable advances in the other sciences. From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge. The latter steps of this progress may be more accidental; but the former are altogether necessary. A republic without laws can never have any duration. On the contrary, in a monarchical government, law arises not necessarily from the forms of government. Monarchy, when absolute, contains even something repugnant to law. Great wisdom and reflection can alone reconcile them. But such a degree of wisdom can never be expected, before the greater refinements and improvements of human reason. These refinements require curiosity, security, and law. The *first* growth, therefore, of the arts and sciences, can never be expected in despotic governments.

There are other causes, which discourage the rise of the refined arts in despotic governments; though I take the want of laws, and the delegation of full powers to every petty magistrate, to be the principal. Eloquence certainly springs up more naturally in popular governments: Emulation, too, in every accomplishment, must there be more animated and enlivened; and genius and capacity have a fuller scope and career. All these causes render free governments the only proper *nursery* for the arts and sciences.

The next observation which I shall make on this head is, *That nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy.* The emulation, which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement: But what I would chiefly insist on is the stop, which such limited territories give both to *power* and to *authority*.

Extended governments, where a single person has great influence, soon become absolute: but small ones change naturally into commonwealths. A large government is accustomed by degrees to tyranny; because each act of violence is at first performed upon a part, which, being distant from the majority, is not taken notice of, nor excites any violent ferment. Besides, a large government, though the whole be discontented, may, by a little art, be kept in obedience; while each part, ignorant of the resolutions of the rest, is afraid to begin any commotion or insurrection. Not to mention, that there is a superstitious reverence for princes, which mankind naturally contract when they do not often see the sovereign, and when many of them become not acquainted with him so as to perceive his weaknesses. And as large states can afford a great expence, in order to support the pomp of majesty; this is a kind of fascination on men, and naturally contributes to the enslaving of them.

In a small government, any act of oppression is immediately

known throughout the whole : The murmurs and discontents proceeding from it, are easily communicated : And the indignation arises the higher, because the subjects are not apt to apprehend, in such states, that the distance is very wide between themselves and their sovereign. "No man," said the prince of Condé, "is a hero to his *Valet de Chambre*." It is certain that admiration and acquaintance are altogether incompatible towards any mortal creature. Sleep and love convinced even Alexander himself that he was not a God : But I suppose that such as daily attended him could easily, from the numberless weaknesses to which he was subject, have given him many still more convincing proofs of his humanity.

But the divisions into small states are favourable to learning, by stopping the progress to *authority* as well as that of *power*. Reputation is often as great a fascination upon men as sovereignty, and is equally destructive to the freedom of thought and examination. But where a number of neighbouring states have a great intercourse of arts and commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other, in matters of taste and of reasoning, and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy. The contagion of popular opinion spreads not so easily from one place to another. It readily receives a check in some state or other, where it concurs not with the prevailing prejudices. And nothing but nature and reason, or at least what bears them a strong resemblance, can force its way through all obstacles, and unite the most rival nations into an esteem and admiration of it.

Greece was a cluster of little principalities, which soon became republics ; and being united both by their near neighbourhood, and by the ties of the same language and interest, they entered into the closest intercourse of commerce and learning. There concurred a happy climate, a soil not unfertile, and a most harmonious and comprehensive language ; so that every circumstance among that people seemed to favour, the rise of the arts and sciences. Each city produced its several artists and philosophers, who refused to yield the preference to those of the neighbouring republics : Their contention and debates sharpened the wits of men : A variety of objects was presented to the judgment, while each challenged the preference to the rest ; and the sciences, not being dwarfed by the restraint of authority, were enabled to make such considerable shoots, as are even at this time the objects of our admiration. After the Roman *Christian* or *Catholic* church had spread itself over the civilized world, and had engrossed all the learning of the times ; being really one large state within itself, and united under one head ; this variety of sects immediately disappeared, and the Peripatetic philosophy was alone admitted.

into all the schools, to the utter depravation of every kind of learning. But mankind, having at length thrown off this yoke, affairs are now returned nearly to the same situation as before, and Europe is at present a copy, at large, of what Greece was formerly a pattern in miniature. We have seen the advantage of this situation in several instances. What checked the progress of the Cartesian philosophy, to which the French nation shewed such a strong propensity towards the end of the last century, but the opposition made to it by the other nations of Europe, who soon discovered the weak sides of that philosophy? The severest scrutiny, which Newton's theory has undergone, proceeded not from his own countrymen, but from foreigners; and if it can overcome the obstacles which it meets with at present in all parts of Europe, it will probably go down triumphant to the latest posterity. The English are become sensible of the scandalous licentiousness of their stage, from the example of the French decency and morals. The French are convinced, that their theatre has become somewhat effeminate, by too much love and gallantry; and begin to approve of the more masculine taste of some neighbouring nations.

In China, there seems to be a pretty considerable stock of politeness and science, which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them. But China is one vast empire, speaking one language, governed by one law, and sympathising in the same manners. The authority of any teacher, such as Confucius, was propagated easily from one corner of the empire to the other. None had courage to resist the torrent of popular opinion: And posterity was not bold enough to dispute what had been universally received by their ancestors. This seems to be one natural reason, why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire\*.

If we consider the face of the globe, Europe of all the four parts of the world is the most broken by seas, rivers, and mountains; and Greece, of all countries of Europe. Hence these regions were naturally divided into several distinct governments: And hence the sciences arose in Greece; and Europe has been hitherto the most constant habitation of them.

I have sometimes been inclined to think, that interruptions in the periods of learning, were they not attended with such a destruction of ancient books, and the records of history, would be rather favourable to the arts and sciences, by breaking the progress of authority, and dethroning the tyrannical usurpers over human reason. In this particular, they have the same influence

\* See NOTE [H.]

as interruptions in political governments and societies. Consider the blind submission of the ancient philosophers to the several masters in each school, and you will be convinced, that little good could be expected from a hundred centuries of such a servile philosophy. Even the Eclectics, who arose about the age of Augustus, notwithstanding their professing to choose freely what pleased them from every different sect, were yet, in the main, as slavish and dependent as any of their brethren; since they sought for truth, not in Nature, but in the several schools; where they supposed she must necessarily be found, though not united in a body, yet dispersed in parts. Upon the revival of learning, those sects of Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists, and Pythagoricians, could never regain any credit or authority; and, at the same time, by the example of their fall, kept men from submitting, with such blind deference, to those new sects, which have attempted to gain an ascendant over them.

The *third* observation; which I shall form on this head, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is, *That though the only proper nursery of these noble plants be a free state; yet may they be transplanted into any government; and that a republic is most favourable to the growth of the sciences, and a civilized monarchy to that of the polite arts.*

To balance a large state or society, whether monarchical or republican, on general laws, is a work of so great difficulty, that no human genius, however comprehensive, is able, by the mere dint of reason and reflection, to effect it. The judgments of many must unite in this work: Experience must guide their labour: Time must bring it to perfection: And the feeling of inconveniences must correct the mistakes, which they inevitably fall into, in their first trials and experiments. Hence appears the impossibility, that this undertaking should be begun and carried on in any monarchy; since such a form of government, ere civilized, knows no other secret or policy, than that of entrusting unlimited powers to every governor or magistrate, and subdividing the people into so many classes and orders of slavery. From such a situation, no improvement can ever be expected in the sciences, in the liberal arts, in laws, and scarcely in the manual arts and manufactures. The same barbarism and ignorance, with which the government commences, is propagated to all posterity, and can never come to a period by the efforts or ingenuity of such unhappy slaves.

But though law, the source of all security and happiness, arises late in any government, and is the slow product of order and of liberty, it is not preserved with the same difficulty with which it is produced; but when it has once taken root, is a hardy plant, which will scarcely ever perish through the ill culture of

men, or the rigour of the seasons. The arts of luxury, and much more the liberal arts, which depend on a refined taste or sentiment, are easily lost; because they are always relished by a few only, whose leisure, fortune, and genius, fit them for such amusements. But what is profitable to every mortal, and in common life, when once discovered, can scarcely fall into oblivion, but by the total subversion of society, and by such furious inundations of barbarous invaders, as obliterate all memory of former arts and civility. Imitation also is apt to transport these coarser and more useful arts from one climate to another, and make them precede the refined arts in their progress; though, perhaps, they sprang after them in their first rise and propagation. From these causes proceed civilized monarchies; where the arts of government, first invented in free states, are preserved to the mutual advantage and security of sovereign and subject.

However perfect, therefore, the monarchical form may appear to some politicians, it owes all its perfection to the republican; nor is it possible, that a pure despotism, established among a barbarous people, can ever, by its native force and energy, refine and polish itself. It must borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments. These advantages are the sole growth of republics. The extensive despotism of a barbarous monarchy, by entering into the detail of the government, as well as into the principal points of administration, for ever prevents all such improvements.

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is so much exempt from private jealousies or interests, that this dependence is scarcely felt. And thus a species of government arises, to which, in a high political rant, we may give the name of *Tyranny*; but which, by a just and prudent administration, may afford tolerable security to the people, and may answer most of the ends of political society.

But though in a civilized monarchy, as well as in a republic, the people have security for the enjoyment of their property; yet in both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind. The only difference is, that, in a republic, the candidates for office must look downwards to gain the suffrages of the people; in a monar-



as interruptions in political governments and societies. Consider the blind submission of the ancient philosophers to the several masters in each school, and you will be convinced, that little good could be expected from a hundred centuries of such a servile philosophy. Even the Eclectics, who arose about the age of Augustus, notwithstanding their professing to choose freely what pleased them from every different sect, were yet, in the main, as slavish and dependent as any of their brethren; since they sought for truth, not in Nature, but in the several schools; where they supposed she must necessarily be found, though not united in a body, yet dispersed in parts. Upon the revival of learning, those sects of Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists, and Pythagorians, could never regain any credit or authority; and, at the same time, by the example of their fall, kept men from submitting, with such blind deference, to those new sects, which have attempted to gain an ascendant over them.

The *third* observation; which I shall form on this head, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is, *That though the only proper nursery of these noble plants be a free state; yet may they be transplanted into any government; and that a republic is most favourable to the growth of the sciences, and a civilized monarchy to that of the polite arts.*

To balance a large state or society, whether monarchical or republican, on general laws, is a work of so great difficulty, that no human genius, however comprehensive, is able, by the mere dint of reason and reflection, to effect it. The judgments of many must unite in this work: Experience must guide their labour: Time must bring it to perfection: And the feeling of inconveniences must correct the mistakes, which they inevitably fall into, in their first trials and experiments. Hence appears the impossibility, that this undertaking should be begun and carried on in any monarchy; since such a form of government; ere civilized, knows no other secret or policy, than that of entrusting unlimited powers to every governor or magistrate, and subdividing the people into so many classes and orders of slavery. From such a situation, no improvement can ever be expected in the sciences, in the liberal arts, in laws, and scarcely in the manual arts and manufactures. The same barbarism and ignorance, with which the government commences, is propagated to all posterity, and can never come to a period by the efforts or ingenuity of such unhappy slaves.

But though law, the source of all security and happiness, arises late in any government, and is the slow product of order and of liberty, it is not preserved with the same difficulty with which it is produced; but when it has once taken root, is a hardy plant, which will scarcely ever perish through the ill culture of

men, or the rigour of the seasons. The arts of luxury, and much more the liberal arts, which depend on a refined taste or sentiment, are easily lost; because they are always relished by a few only, whose leisure, fortune, and genius, fit them for such amusements. But what is profitable to every mortal, and in common life, when once discovered, can scarcely fall into oblivion, but by the total subversion of society, and by such furious inundations of barbarous invaders, as obliterate all memory of former arts and civility. Imitation also is apt to transport these coarser and more useful arts from one climate to another, and make them precede the refined arts in their progress; though, perhaps, they sprang after them in their first rise and propagation. From these causes proceed civilized monarchies; where the arts of government, first invented in free states, are preserved to the mutual advantage and security of sovereign and subject.

However perfect, therefore, the monarchical form may appear to some politicians, it owes all its perfection to the republican; nor is it possible, that a pure despotism, established among a barbarous people, can ever, by its native force and energy, refine and polish itself. It must borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments. These advantages are the sole growth of republics. The extensive despotism of a barbarous monarchy, by entering into the detail of the government, as well as into the principal points of administration, for ever prevents all such improvements.

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is so much exempt from private jealousies or interests, that this dependence is scarcely felt. And thus a species of government arises, to which, in a high political rant, we may give the name of *Tyranny*; but which, by a just and prudent administration, may afford tolerable security to the people, and may answer most of the ends of political society.

But though in a civilized monarchy, as well as in a republic, the people have security for the enjoyment of their property; yet in both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority, have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind. The only difference is, that, in a republic, the candidates for office must look downwards to gain the suffrages of the people; in a monar-

chy, they must turn their attention upwards, to court the good graces and favour of the great. To be successful in the former way, it is necessary for a man to make himself *useful*, by his industry, capacity, or knowledge: To be prosperous in the latter way, it is requisite for him to render himself *agreeable*, by his wit, complaisance, or civility. A strong genius succeeds best in republics: A refined taste in monarchies: And, consequently, the sciences are the more natural growth of the one, and the polite arts of the other.

Not to mention, that monarchies, receiving their chief stability from a superstitious reverence to priests and princes, have commonly abridged the liberty of reasoning, with regard to religion and politics, and consequently metaphysics and morals. All these form the most considerable branches of science. Mathematics and natural philosophy, which only remain, are not half so valuable.

Among the arts of conversation, no one pleases more than mutual deference or civility, which leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companion, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance, so natural to the human mind. A good-natured man, who is well educated, practises this civility to every mortal, without premeditation or interest. But in order to render that valuable quality general among any people, it seems necessary to assist the natural disposition by some general motive. Where power rises upwards from the people to the great, as in all republics, such refinements of civility are apt to be little practised; since the whole state is, by that means, brought near to a level, and every member of it is rendered, in a great measure, independent of another. The people have the advantage, by the authority of their suffrages; the great by the superiority of their station. But in a civilized monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people; but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition and education. Politeness of manners, therefore, arises most naturally in monarchies and courts; and where that flourishes, none of the liberal arts will be altogether neglected or despised.

The republics in Europe are at present noted for want of politeness. *The good-manners of a Swiss civilized in Holland\** is an expression for rusticity among the French. The English, in some degree, fall under the same censure, notwithstanding their learn-

\* C'est la politesse d'un Suisse  
En Hollande civilisé.

ing and genius. And if the Venetians be an exception to the rule, they owe it, perhaps, to their communication with the other Italians, most of whose governments beget a dependence more than sufficient for civilizing their manners.

It is difficult to pronounce any judgment concerning the refinements of the ancient republics in this particular: But I am apt to suspect, that the arts of conversation were not brought so near to perfection among them as the arts of writing and composition. The scurrility of the ancient orators, in many instances, is quite shocking, and exceeds all belief. Vanity too is often not a little offensive in authors of those ages;\* as well as the common licentiousness and immodesty of their style. *Quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, manu, ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat*, says Sallust in one of the gravest and most moral passages of his history. *Nam fuit ante Helenam Cunnus, teterrima belli causa*, is an expression of Horace, in tracing the origin of moral good and evil. Ovid and Lucretius† are almost as licentious in their style as Lord Rochester; though the former were fine gentlemen and delicate writers, and the latter, from the corruptions of that court in which he lived, seems to have thrown off all regard to shame and decency. Juvenal inculcates modesty with great zeal; but sets a very bad example of it, if we consider the impudence of his expressions.

I shall also be bold to affirm, that among the ancients, there was not much delicacy of breeding, or that polite deference and respect, which civility obliges us either to express or counterfeit towards the persons with whom we converse. Cicero was certainly one of the finest gentlemen of his age; yet I must confess I have frequently been shocked with the poor figure under which he represents his friend Atticus, in those dialogues where he himself is introduced as a speaker. That learned and virtuous Roman, whose dignity, though he was only a private gentleman, was inferior to that of no one in Rome, is there shown in rather a more pitiful light than Philaethes's friends in our modern dialogues. He is a humble admirer of the orator, pays him frequent compliments, and receives his instructions, with all the deference which a scholar owes to his master‡. Even Cato is treated in somewhat of a cavalier manner in the dialogues *De Finibus*.

\* It is needless to cite Cicero or Pliny on this head: They are too much noted. But one is a little surprised to find Arrian, a very grave, judicious writer, interrupt the thread of his narration all of sudden, to tell his readers that he himself is as eminent among the Greeks for eloquence, as Alexander was for arms. *Lib. i.*

† This poet (see *lib. iv. 1185*.) recommends a very extraordinary cure for love, and what one expects not to meet with in so elegant and philosophical a poem. It seems to have been the original of some of Dr Swift's imagos. The elegant Catullus and Phædrus fall under the same censure.

‡ *Att. Non mihi videtur ad beate vivendum satis esse virtutem. MAR. At hercule Bruto meo videtur; cujus ego judicium, pace tua dixerim, longe antepono tuo. Tusc. Quest. lib. v.*

One of the most particular details of a real dialogue, which we meet with in antiquity, is related by Polybius;\* when Philip king of Macedon, a prince of wit and parts, met with Titus Flamininus, one of the politest of the Romans, as we learn from Plutarch,† accompanied with ambassadors from almost all the Greek cities. The Ætolian ambassador very abruptly tells the king, that he talked like a fool or a madman (*ἄνθρωπος*) "That's evident, (says his Majesty), even to a blind man;" which was a raillery on the blindness of his excellency. Yet all this did not pass the usual bounds: For the conference was not disturbed; and Flamininus was very well diverted with these strokes of humour. At the end, when Philip craved a little time to consult with his friends, of whom he had none present, the Roman general, being desirous also to show his wit, as the historian says, tells him, "That perhaps the reason why he had none of his friends with him, was because he had murdered them all;" which was actually the case. This unprovoked piece of rusticity is not condemned by the historian; caused no farther resentment in Philip than to excite a Sardovian smile, or what we call a grin; and hindered him not from renewing the conference next day Plutarch‡, too, mentions this raillery amongst the witty and agreeable sayings of Flamininus.

Cardinal Wolsey apologized for his famous piece of insolence, in saying, *EGO ET REX MEUS, I and my King*, by observing, that this expression was conformable to the *Latin* idiom, and that a Roman always named himself before the person to whom, or of whom, he spake. Yet this seems to have been an instance of want of civility among that people. The ancients made it a rule, that the person of the greatest dignity should be mentioned first in the discourse; insomuch, that we find the spring of a quarrel and jealousy between the Romans and Ætolians, to have been a poet's naming the Ætolians before the Romans, in celebrating a victory gained by their united arms over the Macedonian§§. Thus Livia disgusted Tiberius by placing her own name before his in an inscription||.

No advantages in this world are pure and unmixed. In like manner, as modern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity; so the ancient simplicity, which is naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity.

If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of *gallantry*, the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned as the causes of

\* *Ibid.* xvii.

‡ Plut. in Vita Flamin.

§ *Ibid.*

† In Vita Flamin.

|| Tacit, Ann. lib. iiii. cap. 64.

this refinement. No one denies this invention to be modern\*: But some of the more zealous partisans of the ancients have asserted it to be foppish and ridiculous, and a reproach, rather than a credit, to the present age†. It may here be proper to examine this question.

Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affection between the sexes, which, even in the fiercest and most rapacious animals, is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives. Nay, even in those species, where nature limits the indulgence of this appetite to one season and to one object, and forms a kind of marriage or association between a single male and female, there is yet a visible complacency and benevolence, which extends farther, and mutually softens the affections of the sexes towards each other. How much more must this have place in man, where the confinement of the appetite is not natural, but either is derived accidentally from some strong charm of love, or arises from reflections on duty and convenience. Nothing, therefore, can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is *natural* in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it than on all other laudable passions. They only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it; and give it a proper grace and expression.

But gallantry is as *generous* as it is *natural*. To correct such gross vices, as lead us to commit real injury on others, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education. Where *that* is not attended to, in some degree, no human society can subsist. But, in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good manners have been invented, and have carried the matter somewhat farther. Wherever nature has given the mind a propensity to any vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the bias on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behaviour, the appearance of sentiments different from those to which they naturally incline.\* Thus, as we are commonly proud and selfish, and apt to assume the preference above others, a polite man learns to behave with deference towards his companions, and to yield the superiority to them in all the common incidents of society. In like manner, wherever a person's situation may naturally beget any disagreeable suspicion in him, it is the part of good manners to prevent it, by a studied display of

\* In the *Self-Tormentor* of TERENCE, Clinias, whenever he comes to town, instead of waiting on his mistress, sends for her to come to him.

† Lord Shaftesbury. See his *Moralists*.

sentiments, directly contrary to those of which he is apt to be jealous. Thus, old men know their infirmities, and naturally dread contempt from the youth: Hence well-educated youth redouble the instances of respect and deference to their elders. Strangers and foreigners are without protection: Hence, in all polite countries, they receive the highest civilities, and are entitled to the first place in every company. A man is lord in his own family; and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority: Hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of every one; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please, which may not betray too visible an affectation, or impose too much constraint on his guests\*. Gallantry is nothing but an instance of the same generous attention. As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority, by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry. In good company, you need not ask, Who is the master of the feast? The man who sits in the lowest place, and who is always industrious, in helping every one, is certainly the person. We must either condemn all such instances of generosity, as foppish and affected, or admit of gallantry among the rest. The ancient Muscovites wedded their wives with a whip, instead of a ring. The same people, in their own houses, took always the precedence above foreigners, even† foreign ambassadors. These two instances of their generosity and politeness are much of a piece.

Gallantry is not less compatible with *wisdom* and *prudence*, than with *nature* and *generosity*; and, when under proper regulations, contributes more than any other invention to the *entertainment* and *improvement* of the youth of both sexes. Among every species of animals, nature has founded on the love between the sexes their sweetest and best enjoyment. But the satisfaction of the bodily appetite is not alone sufficient to gratify the

\* The frequent mention in ancient authors of that ill-bred custom of the master of the family's eating better bread, or drinking better wine at table, than he afforded his guests, is but an indifferent mark of the civility of those ages. See Juvenal, sat. 6; Plin. lib. xiv. cap. 13.; also Plinii Epist. Lucian de mercede conductæ, Saturnalia &c. There is scarcely any part of Europe at present so uncivilized as to admit of such a custom.

† See Relation of three Embassies, by the Earl of Carleton.

mind; and, even among brute creatures, we find that their play and dalliance, and other expressions of fondness, form the greatest part of the entertainment. In rational beings, we must certainly admit the mind for a considerable share. Were we to rob the feast of all its garniture of reason, discourse, sympathy, friendship, and gaiety, what remains would scarcely be worth acceptance, in the judgment of the truly elegant and luxurious.

What better school for manners than the company of virtuous women, where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency?

Among the ancients, the character of the fair sex was considered as altogether domestic; nor were they regarded as part of the polite world, or of good company. This, perhaps, is the true reason why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent (unless one may except the *Banquet* of Xenophon, and the *Dialogues* of Lucian), though many of their serious compositions are altogether inimitable. Horace condemns the coarse raileries and cold jests of Plautus: But, though the most easy, agreeable, and judicious writer in the world, is his own talent for ridicule very striking or refined? This, therefore, is one considerable improvement, which the polite arts have received from gallantry, and from courts where it first arose.

But, to return from this digression, I shall advance it as a *fourth* observation on this subject, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, *That when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation; where they formerly flourished.*

It must be confessed, that this maxim, though conformable to experience, may at first sight be esteemed contrary to reason. If the natural genius of mankind be the same in all ages, and in almost all countries (as seems to be the truth), it must very much forward and cultivate this genius, to be possessed of patterns in every art, which may regulate the taste, and fix the objects of imitation. The models left us by the ancients gave birth to all the arts about 200 years ago, and have mightily advanced their progress in every country of Europe: Why had they not a like effect during the reign of Trajan and his successors, when they were much more entire, and were still admired and studied by the whole world? So late as the emperor Justinian, the Poet, by way of distinction, was understood, among the Greeks, to be Homer; among the Romans, Virgil. Such admirations still remained for these divine genuises; though no poet had appear-



ed for many centuries, who could justly pretend to have imitated them.

A man's genius is always, in the beginning of life, as much unknown to himself as to others; and it is only after frequent trials, attended with success, that he dares think himself equal to those undertakings, in which those, who have succeeded, have fixed the admiration of mankind. If his own nation be already possessed of many models of eloquence, he naturally compares his own juvenile exercises with these; and being sensible of the great disproportion, is discouraged from any farther attempts, and never aims at a rivalry with those authors, whom he so much admires. A noble emulation is the source of every excellence. Admiration and modesty naturally extinguish this emulation. And no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty as a truly great genius.

Next to emulation, the greatest encourager of the noble arts is praise and glory. A writer is animated with new force, when he hears the applauses of the world for his former productions; and, being roused by such a motive, he often reaches a pitch of perfection, which is equally surprising to himself and to his readers. But when the posts of honour are all occupied, his first attempts are but coldly received by the public; being compared to productions, which are both in themselves more excellent, and have already the advantage of an established reputation. Were Moliere and Corneille to bring upon the stage at present their early productions, which were formerly so well received, it would discourage the young poets, to see the indifference and disdain of the public. The ignorance of the age alone could have given admission to the *Prince of Tyre*; but it is to that we owe *The Moor*: Had *Every Man in his Humour* been rejected, we had never seen *Volpone*.

Perhaps, it may not be for the advantage of any nation to have the arts imported from their neighbours in too great perfection. This extinguishes emulation, and sinks the ardour of the generous youth. So many models of Italian painting brought to England, instead of exciting our artists, is the cause of their small progress in that noble art. The same, perhaps, was the case of Rome, when it received the arts from Greece. That multitude of polite productions in the French language, dispersed all over Germany and the North, hinder these nations from cultivating their own language, and keep them still dependent on their neighbours for those elegant entertainments.

It is true, the ancients had left us models in every kind of writing, which are highly worthy of admiration. But besides that they were written in languages known only to the learned; besides this, I say, the comparison is not so perfect or entire between modern wits, and those who lived in so remote an age. Had

Waller been born in Rome, during the reign of Tiberius, his first productions had been despised, when compared to the finished odes of Horace. But in this island the superiority of the Roman poet diminished nothing from the fame of the English. We esteemed ourselves sufficiently happy, that our climate and language could produce but a faint copy of so excellent an original.

In short, the arts and sciences, like some plants, require a fresh soil; and however rich the land may be, and however you may recruit it by art or care, it will never, when once exhausted, produce any thing that is perfect or finished in the kind.

## ESSAY IX.

---

### OF REFINEMENT IN THE ARTS.

LUXURY is a word of an uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blameable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person. The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be exactly fixed, more than in other moral subjects. To imagine, that the gratifying of any sense, or the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a head that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. I have, indeed, heard of a monk abroad, who, because the windows of his cell opened upon a noble prospect, made a *covenant with his eyes* never to turn that way, or receive so sensual a gratification. And such is the crime of drinking Champagne or Burgundy, preferable to small beer or porter. These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expense of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists. To be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one's expense entirely to such a gratification, without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart destitute of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for

all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprised at those preposterous opinions which have been entertained concerning it; while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and, on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and represent it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving, *first*, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both on *private* and on *public* life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; action, pleasure, and indolence: And though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person; yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence, to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroy all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned that, where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties; and, by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits, exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts, is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers and ship-carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be brought to perfection in a nation which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts, and the minds of men being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: Nor is it possible, that when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to shew their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an increase of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry*, *knowledge*, and *humanity*, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.

Nor are these advantages attended with disadvantages that bear any proportion to them. The more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses. One may safely affirm, that the Tartars are oftener guilty of beastly gluttony, when they feast on their dead horses, than European courtiers with all their refinements of cookery. And if libertine love, or even infidelity to the marriage-bed, be more frequent in polite ages, when it is often regarded only as a piece of gallantry; drunkenness, on the other hand, is much less common: a vice more odious, and more pernicious, both to mind and body. And in this matter I would appeal, not only to an Ovid or a Petronius

but to a Seneca or a Cato. We know, that Cæsar, during Cataline's conspiracy, being necessitated to put into Cato's hands a *billet-doux*, which discovered an intrigue with Servilia, Cato's own sister, that stern philosopher threw it back to him with indignation; and, in the bitterness of his wrath, gave him the appellation of drunkard, as a term more opprobrious than that with which he could more justly have reproached him.\*

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone; they diffuse their beneficial influence on the public, and render the government as great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The increase and consumption of all the commodities, which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantages to society; because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In a nation where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies from the industry of such slothful members.

The bounds of all the European kingdoms are, at present, nearly the same they were two hundred years ago: But what a difference is there in the power and grandeur of those kingdoms? which can be ascribed to nothing but the increase of art and industry. When Charles VIII. of France invaded Italy, he carried with him about 20,000 men; yet this armament so exhausted the nation, as we learn from Guicciardin, that for some years it was not able to make so great an effort. The late king of France, in time of war, kept in pay above 400,000 men;† though from Mazarine's death to his own, he was engaged in a course of wars that lasted near thirty years.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge inseparable from ages of art and refinement; as, on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human

\* It is futile to determine the relative depravity of Drunkenness and Libertine Love. Their moral character is equally heinous: Both bring on the offender "that recompense of his error that is meet." The highest degree of refinement has not unfrequently been found to co-exist with drunkenness, quite as much as with libertine excess, the they tend alike to

Let in defilement to the inward parts;  
The soul grows clotted by contagion,  
Inbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose  
The divine property of her first being.

It is not improbable that the epithet used by Cato implied intemperance of libertine love, and not intemperance in drink.—ED.

† The inscription on the Place-de-Vendome says 440,000.

reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture. Can we expect that a government will be well-modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning-wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage? Not to mention, that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and make the return to submission impracticable, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance. Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe, and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle, where honour and interest steel men against compassion, as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

Nor need we fear, that men, by losing their ferocity, will lose their martial spirit, or become less undaunted and vigorous in defence of their country or their liberty. The arts have no such effect in enervating either the mind or body. On the contrary, industry, their inseparable attendant, adds new force to both. And if anger, which is said to be the whetstone of courage, loses somewhat of its asperity, by politeness and refinement; a sense of honour, which is a stronger, more constant and more governable principle, acquires fresh vigour by that elevation of genius which arises from knowledge and a good education. Add to this, that courage can neither have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people. The ancients remarked, that Datames was the only barbarian that ever knew the art of war. And Pyrrhus, seeing the Romans marshal their army with some art and skill, said with surprise, *These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline!* It is observable, that, as the old Romans, by applying themselves solely to war, were almost the only uncivilized people that ever possessed military discipline; so the modern Italians are the only civilized people, among Europeans, that ever wanted courage and a martial spirit. Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the Italians to their luxury, or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the French and English, whose bravery is as incon-

testable, as their love for the arts, and their assiduity in commerce. The Italian historians give us a more satisfactory reason for this degeneracy of their countrymen. They show us how the sword was dropped at once by all the Italian sovereigns: While the Venetian aristocracy was jealous of its subjects, the Florentine democracy applied itself entirely to commerce: Rome was governed by priests, and Naples by women. War then became the business of soldiers of fortune, who spared one another, and, to the astonishment of the world, could engage a whole day in what they called a battle, and return at night to their camp without the least bloodshed.

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient Rome, which, joining to its poverty and rusticity virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprising height of grandeur and liberty; but having learned from its conquered provinces the Asiatic luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; whence arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the Latin classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East; insomuch that Sallust represents a taste for painting as a vice, no less than lewdness and drinking. And so popular were these sentiments, during the latter ages of the Republic, that this author abounds in praises of the old rigid Roman virtue, though himself the most egregious instance of modern luxury and corruption; speaks contemptuously of the Grecian eloquence, though the most elegant writer in the world; nay, employs preposterous digressions and declamations to this purpose, though a model of taste and correctness.

But it would be easy to prove, that these writers mistook the cause of the disorders in the Roman state, and ascribed to luxury and the arts, what really proceeded from an ill-modelled government, and the unlimited extent of conquests. Refinement on the pleasures and conveniences of life has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption. The value which all men put upon any particular pleasure, depends on comparison and experience; nor is a porter less greedy of money, which he spends on bacon and brandy, than a courtier, who purchases champagne and ortolans. Riches are valuable at all times, and to all men; because they always purchase pleasures, such as men are accustomed to and desire: Nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money, but a sense of honour and virtue; which, if it is not nearly equal at all times, will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement.

Of all European kingdoms, Poland seems the most defective in the arts of war as well as peace, mechanical as well as liberal;

yet it is there that venality and corruption do most prevail. The nobles seem to have preserved their crown elective for no other purpose, than regularly to sell it to the highest bidder. This is almost the only species of commerce with which that people are acquainted.

The liberties of England, so far from decaying since the improvements in the arts, have never flourished so much as during that period. And though corruption may seem to increase of late years, this is chiefly to be ascribed to our established liberty, when our princes have found the impossibility of governing without parliaments, or of terrifying parliaments by the phantom of prerogative. Not to mention, that this corruption or venality prevails much more among the electors than the elected; and therefore cannot justly be ascribed to any refinements in luxury.

If we consider the matter in a proper light, we shall find, that a progress in the arts is rather favourable to liberty, and has a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. In rude unpolished nations, where the arts are neglected, all labour is bestowed on the cultivation of the ground; and the whole society is divided into two classes, proprietors of land, and their vassals or tenants. The latter are necessarily dependent, and fitted for slavery and subjection; especially where they possess no riches, and are not valued for their knowledge in agriculture; as must always be the case where the arts are neglected. The former naturally erect themselves into petty tyrants; and must either submit to an absolute master, for the sake of peace and order; or if they will preserve their independency, like the ancient barons, they must fall into feuds and contests among themselves, and throw the whole society into such confusion, as is perhaps worse than the most despotic government. But where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may secure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.

The lower house is the support of our popular government; and all the world acknowledges, that it owed its chief influence and consideration to the increase of commerce, which threw such a balance of property into the hands of the Commons. How inconsistent, then, is it to blame so violently a refinement in the



arts, and to represent it as the bane of liberty and public spirit!

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature: And as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgements pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is that at present we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived, by comparing different nations that are contemporaries; where we both judge more impartially, and can better set in opposition those manners with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized ages; and, by the refined Greeks and Romans, were ascribed to all the barbarous nations which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors, so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtue, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An ancient Frank or Saxon may be highly extolled: But I believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a Moor or Tartar, than those of a French or English gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

We come now to the *second* position which we proposed to illustrate, to wit, that, as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and conveniences of life, is advantageous to the public; so wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

*Let us consider what we call vicious luxury.* No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A gratification is only vicious when it engrosses all a man's expense, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune. Suppose that he correct the vice, and employ part of his expence in the education of his children, in the support of his friends, and relieving the poor; would any prejudice result to society? On the contrary, the same consumption would arise; and that labour, which at present is employed only in producing a slender gratification to one man, would relieve the necessitous, and bestow satisfaction on hundreds. The same care and toil that raise a dish of pease at Christmas, would give bread to a whole family, during six months. To say that, without a vicious luxury, the labour would not have been employed at all, is only to say, that there is some other defect in human nature, such as indolence, selfishness,

inattention to others, for which luxury, in some measure, provides a remedy; as one poison may be an antidote to another. But virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected.

Suppose the same number of men, that are at present in Great Britain, with the same soil and climate; I ask, is it not possible for them to be happier, by the most perfect way of life that can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation that Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition? To assert, that they cannot, appears evidently ridiculous. As the land is able to maintain more than all its present inhabitants, they could never, in such a Utopian state, feel any other ills than those which arise from bodily sickness; and these are not the half of human miseries. All other ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow. You must only take care to remove all the vices. If you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing *vicious* luxury, without curing sloth and an indifference to others, you only diminish industry in the state, and add nothing to men's charity or their generosity. Let us, therefore, rest contented with asserting, that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone; but let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public\*? And indeed it seems, upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.

I thought this reasoning necessary, in order to give some light to a philosophical question, which has been much disputed in England. I call it a *philosophical* question, not a *political* one. For whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice; this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice by another; and in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society. Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills; but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more hurtful both to private persons and to the public. When sloth reigns, a mean uncultivated way of life pre

\* Fable of the Bees.

vails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment. And if the sovereign, in such a situation, demands the service of his subjects, the labour of the state suffices only to furnish the necessities of life to the labourers, and can afford nothing to those who are employed in the public service.

## ESSAY X.

### OF COMMERCE.

THE greater part of mankind may be divided into two classes; that of *shallow* thinkers, who fall short of the truth; and that of *abstruse* thinkers, who go beyond it. The latter class are by far the most rare; and, I may add, by far the most useful and valuable. They suggest hints, at least, and start difficulties, which they want, perhaps, skill to pursue; but which may produce fine discoveries, when handled by men who have a more just way of thinking. At worst, what they say is uncommon; and if it should cost some pains to comprehend it, one has, however, the pleasure of hearing something that is new. An author is little to be valued who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee house conversation.

All people of *shallow* thought are apt to decry even those of *solid* understanding, as *abstruse* thinkers, and metaphysicians, and refiners; and never will allow any thing to be just which is beyond their own weak conceptions. There are some cases, I own, where an extraordinary refinement affords a strong presumption of falsehood, and where no reasoning is to be trusted but what is natural and easy. When a man deliberates concerning his conduct in any *particular* affair, and forms schemes in politics, trade, economy, or any business in life, he never ought to draw his arguments too fine, or connect too long a chain of consequences together. Something is sure to happen, that will disconcert his reasoning, and produce an event different from what he expected. But when we reason upon *general* subjects, one may justly affirm, that our speculations can scarcely ever be too fine, provided they be just; and that the difference between a common man and a man of genius is chiefly seen in the shallowness or depth of the principles upon which they proceed. General reasonings seem intricate, merely because they are general; nor is it easy for the bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great number of particulars, that common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixed, from the other superfluous circumstances. Every judgment or conclusion, with them, is particular. They cannot enlarge their view to those

universal propositions, which comprehend under them an infinite number of individuals, and include a whole science in a single theorem. Their eye is confounded with such an extensive prospect; and the conclusions derived from it, even though clearly expressed, seem intricate and obscure. But however intricate they may seem, it is certain, that general principles, if just and sound, must always prevail in the general course of things, though they may fail in particular cases; and it is the chief business of philosophers to regard the general course of things. I may add, that it is also the chief business of politicians; especially in the domestic government of the state, where the public good, which is, or ought to be their object, depends on the concurrence of a multitude of causes; not as in foreign politics, on accidents and chances, and the caprices of a few persons. This therefore makes the difference between *particular* deliberations and *general* reasonings, and renders subtilty and refinement much more suitable to the latter than to the former.

I thought this introduction necessary before the following discourses on *commerce, money, interest, balance of trade, &c.* where, perhaps, there will occur some principles which are uncommon, and which may seem too refined and subtle for such vulgar subjects. If false, let them be rejected: But no one ought to entertain a prejudice against them, merely because they are out of the common road.

The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear thinking that it may possibly admit of exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce, and riches, and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish its authority among the neighbouring nations. Man is a very variable being, and susceptible of many different opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true, while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.

The bulk of every state may be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers*. The former are employed in the culture of the land; the latter work up the materials furnished by the former, into all the commodities which are necessary or ornamental to human life. As soon as men quit their savage state, where they

liya chiefly by hunting and fishing, they must fall into these two classes; though the arts of agriculture employ *at first* the most numerous part of the society\*. Time and experience improve so much these arts, that the land may easily maintain a much greater number of men than those who are immediately employed in its culture, or who furnish the more necessary manufactures to such as are so employed.

If these superfluous hands apply themselves to the finer arts, which are commonly denominated the arts of *luxury*, they add to the happiness of the state; since they afford to many the opportunity of receiving enjoyments, with which they would otherwise have been unacquainted. But may not another scheme be proposed for the employment of these superfluous hands? May not the sovereign lay claim to them, and employ them in fleets and armies, to increase the dominions of the state abroad, and spread its fame over distant nations? It is certain, that the fewer desires and wants are found in the proprietors and labourers of land, the fewer hands do they employ; and consequently, the superfluities of the land, instead of maintaining tradesmen and manufacturers, may support fleets and armies to a much greater extent, than where a great many arts are required to minister to the luxury of particular persons. Here therefore seems to be a kind of opposition between the greatness of the state and the happiness of the subject. A state is never greater than when all its superfluous hands are employed in the service of the public. The ease and convenience of private persons require, that these hands should be employed in their service. The one can never be satisfied but at the expence of the other. As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench on the luxury of individuals, so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force, and check the ambition of the sovereign.

Nor is this reasoning merely chimerical; but, is founded on history and experience. The republic of Sparta was certainly more powerful than any state now in the world, consisting of an equal number of people; and this was owing entirely to the want of commerce and luxury. The Helotes were the labourers; the Spartans were the soldiers or gentlemen. It is evident, that the labour of the Helotes could not have maintained so great a number of Spartans, had these latter lived in ease and delicacy, and given employment to a great variety of trades and manufactures. The like policy may be remarked in Rome. And, indeed, through-

\* Mons. Melon, in his political essay on commerce, asserts, that even at present, if you divide France into twenty parts, sixteen are labourers or peasants; two only artificers; one belonging to the law, church, and military; and one merchants, financiers, and bourgeois. This calculation is certainly very erroneous. In France, England, and almost most parts of Europe, half of the inhabitants live in cities; and even of those who live in the country, a great number are artisans, perhaps above a third.

out all ancient history, it is observable, that the smallest republics raised and maintained greater armies, than states, consisting of triple the number of inhabitants, are able to support at present. It is computed, that in all European nations, the proportion between soldiers and people does not exceed one to a hundred. But we read, that the city of Rome alone, with its small territory, raised and maintained, in early times, ten legions against the Latins. Athens, the whole of whose dominions was not larger than Yorkshire, sent to the expedition against Sicily near forty thousand men\*. Dionysius the elder, it is said, maintained a standing army of a hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, besides a large fleet of four hundred sail†; though his territories extended no farther than the city of Syracuse, about a third of the island of Sicily, and some sea-port towns and garrisons on the coast of Italy and Illyricum. It is true, the ancient armies, in time of war, subsisted much upon plunder: But did not the enemy plunder in their turn? which was a more ruinous way of levying a tax, than any other that could be devised. In short, no probable reason can be assigned for the great power of the more ancient states above the modern, but their want of commerce and luxury. Few artisans were maintained by the labour of the farmers, and therefore more soldiers might live upon it. Livy says, that Rome, in his time, would find it difficult to raise as large an army as that which, in her early days, she sent out against the Gauls and Latins‡. Instead of those soldiers who fought for liberty and empire in Camillus's time, there were, in Augustus's days, musicians, painters, cooks, players, and tailors; and if the land was equally cultivated at both periods, it could certainly maintain equal numbers in the one profession as in the other. They added nothing to the mere necessities of life, in the latter period more than in the former.

It is natural on this occasion to ask, whether sovereigns may not return to the maxims of ancient policy, and consult their own interest in this respect, more than the happiness of their subjects? I answer, that it appears to me almost impossible; and that because ancient policy was violent, and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things. It is well known with what peculiar laws Sparta was governed, and what a prodigy that republic is justly esteemed by every one, who has considered human nature, as it has displayed itself in other nations, and other ages. Were the testimony of history less positive and circumstantial,

\* THUCYDIDES, lib. vii.

† Dion. Sic. lib. viii. This account, I own, is somewhat suspicious, not to say worse; chiefly because this army was not composed of citizens, but of mercenary forces.

‡ Livy, lib. vii. cap. 24. "Adeo in que laboramus," says he. "sola crevimus, etiam luxuriamque."

such a government would appear a mere philosophical whim or fiction, and impossible ever to be reduced to practice. And though the Roman and other ancient republics were supported on principles somewhat more natural, yet was there an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, to make them submit to such grievous burdens. They were free states; they were small ones; and the age being martial, all their neighbours were continually in arms. Freedom naturally begets public spirit, especially in small states; and this public spirit, this *amor patriæ*, must increase, when the public is almost in continual alarm, and men are obliged, every moment, to expose themselves to the greatest dangers for its defence. A continual succession of wars makes every citizen a soldier: He takes the field in his turn: And during his service he is chiefly maintained by himself. This service is indeed equivalent to a heavy tax; yet is it less felt by a people addicted to arms, who fight for honour and revenge more than pay, and are unacquainted with gain and industry, as well as pleasure.\* Not to mention the great equality of fortunes among the inhabitants of the ancient republics, where every field, belonging to a different proprietor, was able to maintain a family, and rendered the numbers of citizens very considerable, even without trade and manufactures.

But though the want of trade and manufactures, among a free and very martial people, may sometimes have no other effect than to render the public more powerful, it is certain, that, in the common course of human affairs, it will have a quite contrary tendency. Sovereigns must take mankind as they find them, and cannot pretend to introduce any violent change in their principles and ways of thinking. A long course of time, with a variety of accidents and circumstances, are requisite to produce those great revolutions, which so much diversify the face of human affairs. And the less natural any set of principles are, which support a particular society, the more difficulty will a legislator meet with in raising and cultivating them. It is his best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind, and give it all the improvements of which it is susceptible. Now, according to the most natural course of things, industry, and arts, and trade, increase the power of the sovereign, as well as the happiness of the subjects; and that policy is violent which aggrandizes the public by the poverty of individuals. This will easily appear from a few considerations, which will present to us the consequences of sloth and barbarity.

Where manufactures and mechanic arts are not cultivated, the bulk of the people must apply themselves to agriculture; and if their skill and industry increase, there must arise a great super-

\* See Note [I.]

fluity from their labour, beyond what suffices to maintain them. They have no temptation, therefore, to increase their skill and industry; since they cannot exchange that superfluity for any commodities which may serve either to their pleasure or vanity. A habit of indolence naturally prevails. The greater part of the land lies uncultivated. What is cultivated, yields not its utmost, for want of skill and assiduity in the farmers. If at any time the public exigencies require that great numbers should be employed in the public service, the labour of the people furnishes now no superfluities by which these numbers can be maintained. The labourers cannot increase their skill and industry on a sudden. Lands uncultivated cannot be brought into tillage for some years. The armies, meanwhile, must either make sudden and violent conquests, or disband for want of subsistence. A regular attack or defence, therefore, is not to be expected from such a people, and their soldiers must be as ignorant and unskilful as their farmers and manufacturers.

Every thing in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions are the only causes of labour. When a nation abounds in manufactures and mechanic arts, the proprietors of land, as well as the farmers, study agriculture as a science, and redouble their industry and attention. The superfluity, which arises from their labour, is not lost; but is exchanged with manufactures for those commodities which men's luxury now makes them covet. By this means, land furnishes a great deal more of the necessities of life than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, this superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufacturers and the improvers of liberal arts. But it is easy for the public to convert many of these manufacturers into soldiers, and maintain them by that superfluity which arises from the labour of the farmers. Accordingly we find, that this is the case in all civilized governments. When the sovereign raises an army, what is the consequence? He imposes a tax. This tax obliges all the people to retrench what is least necessary to their subsistence. Those who labour in such commodities must either enlist in the troops, or turn themselves to agriculture, and thereby oblige some labourers to enlist for want of business. And to consider the matter abstractly, manufactures increase the power of the state only as they store up so much labour, and that of a kind to which the public may lay claim, without depriving any one of the necessities of life. The more labour, therefore, that is employed beyond mere necessities, the more powerful is any state; since the persons engaged in that labour may easily be converted to the public service. In a state without manufactures, there may be the same number of hands; but there is not the same quantity of labour, nor of the same kind. All the labour



is there bestowed upon necessities, which can admit of little or no abatement.

Thus the greatness of the sovereign, and the happiness of the state, are in a great measure united with regard to trade and manufactures. It is a violent method, and in most cases impracticable, to oblige the labourer to toil, in order to raise from the land more than what subsists himself and family. Furnish him with manufactures and commodities, and he will do it of himself; afterwards you will find it easy to seize some part of his superfluous labour, and employ it in the public service, without giving him his wonted return. Being accustomed to industry, he will think this less grievous, than if at once you obliged him to an augmentation of labour without any reward. The case is the same with regard to the other members of the state. The greater is the stock of labour of all kinds, the greater quantity may be taken from the heap, without making any sensible alteration in it.

A public granary of corn, a storehouse of cloth, a magazine of arms; all these must be allowed real riches and strength in any state. Trade and industry are really nothing but a stock of labour, which, in times of peace and tranquillity, is employed for the ease and satisfaction of individuals, but in the exigencies of state, may in part be turned to public advantage. Could we convert a city into a kind of fortified camp, and infuse into each breast so martial a genius, and such a passion for public good, as to make every one willing to undergo the greatest hardships for the sake of the public, these affections might now, as in ancient times, prove alone a sufficient spur to industry, and support the community. It would then be advantageous, as in camps, to banish all arts and luxury; and, by restrictions on equipage and tables, make the provisions and forage last longer than if the army were loaded with a number of superfluous retainers. But as these principles are too disinterested, and too difficult to support, it is requisite to govern men by other passions, and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury. The camp is, in this case, loaded with a superfluous retinue, but the provisions flow in proportionably larger. The harmony of the whole is still supported, and the natural bent of the mind, being more complied with, individuals, as well as the public, find their account in the observance of those maxims.

The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of *foreign* commerce in augmenting the power of the state, as well as the riches and happiness of the subject. It increases the stock of labour in the nation; and the sovereign may convert what share of it he finds necessary to the service of the public. Foreign trade, by its imports, furnishes materials for new manu-

factures; and, by its exports, it produces labour in particular commodities, which could not be consumed at home. In short, a kingdom that has a large import and export, must abound more with industry, and that employed upon delicacies and luxuries, than a kingdom which rests contented with its native commodities. It is therefore more powerful, as well as richer and happier. The individuals reap the benefit of these commodities, so far as they gratify the senses and appetites; and the public is also a gainer, while a greater stock of labour is, by this means, stored up against any public exigency; that is, a greater number of laborious men are maintained, who may be diverted to the public service, without robbing any one of the necessities, or even the chief conveniences of life.

If we consult history, we shall find, that in most nations foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury. The temptation is stronger to make use of foreign commodities which are ready for use, and which are entirely new to us, than to make improvements on any domestic commodity, which always advance by slow degrees, and never affect us by their novelty. The profit is also very great in exporting what is superfluous at home, and what bears no price, to foreign nations, whose soil or climate is not favourable to that commodity. Thus men become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury, and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade; and this perhaps is the chief advantage which arises from a commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence; and presenting the gayer and more opulent part of the nation with objects of luxury which they never before dreamed of, raises in them a desire of a more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed. And, at the same time, the few merchants who possess the secret of this importation and exportation, make great profits, and becoming rivals in wealth to the ancient nobility, tempt other adventurers to become their rivals in commerce. Imitation soon diffuses all those arts, while domestic manufacturers emulate the foreign in their improvements, and work up every home commodity to the utmost perfection of which it is susceptible. Their own steel and iron, in such laborious hands, become equal to the gold and rubies of the Indies.

When, the affairs of the society are once brought to this situation, a nation may lose most of its foreign trade, and yet continue a great and powerful people. If strangers will not take any particular commodity of ours, we must cease to labour in it. The same hands will turn themselves towards some refinement in other commodities which may be wanted at home; and there

must always be materials for them to work upon, till every person in the state, who possesses riches, enjoys as great plenty of home commodities, and those in as great perfection as he desires; which can never possibly happen. China is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world, though it has very little commerce beyond its own territories.

It will not, I hope, be considered as a superfluous digression, if I here observe, that as the multitude of mechanical arts is advantageous, so is the great number of persons to whose share the productions of these arts fall. A too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniences of life. No one can doubt but such an equality is most suitable to human nature, and diminishes much less from the *happiness* of the rich, than it adds to that of the poor. It also augments the *power of the state*, and makes any extraordinary taxes or impositions be paid with more cheerfulness. Where the riches are engrossed by a few, these must contribute very largely to the supplying of the public necessities; but when the riches are dispersed among multitudes, the burden feels light on every shoulder, and the taxes make not a very sensible difference on any one's way of living.

Add to this, that where the riches are in few hands, these must enjoy all the power, and will readily conspire to lay the whole burden on the poor, and oppress them still farther, to the discouragement of all industry.

In this circumstance consists the great advantage of England above any nation at present in the world, or that appears in the records of any story. It is true, the English feel some disadvantages in foreign trade by the high price of labour, which is in part the effect of the riches of their artisans, as well as of the plenty of money. But as foreign trade is not the most material circumstance, it is not to be put in competition with the happiness of so many millions; and if there were no more to endear to them that free government under which they live, this alone were sufficient. The poverty of the common people is a natural, if not an infallible effect of absolute monarchy; though I doubt, whether it be always true on the other hand, that their riches are an infallible result of liberty. Liberty must be attended with particular accidents, and a certain turn of thinking, in order to produce that effect. Lord Bacon, accounting for the great advantages obtained by the English in their wars with France, ascribes them chiefly to the superior ease and plenty of the common people amongst the former; yet the government of the two kingdoms was, at that time, pretty much alike. Where the labourers and artisans are accustomed to work for low wages, and

to retain but a small part of the fruits of their labour, it is difficult for them, even in a free government, to better their condition, or conspire among themselves to heighten their wages; but even where they are accustomed to a more plentiful way of life, it is easy for the rich, in an arbitrary government, to conspire against *them*, and throw the whole burden of the taxes on their shoulders.

It may seem an odd position, that the poverty of the common people in France, Italy, and Spain, is, in some measure, owing to the superior riches of the soil and happiness of the climate; yet there want not reasons to justify this paradox. In such a fine mould or soil as that of those more southern regions, agriculture is an easy art; and one man, with a couple of sorry horses, will be able, in a season, to cultivate as much land as will pay a pretty considerable rent to the proprietor. All the art, which the farmer knows, is to leave his ground fallow for a year, as soon as it is exhausted; and the warmth of the sun alone and temperature of the climate enrich it, and restore its fertility. Such poor peasants, therefore, require only a simple maintenance for their labour. They have no stock or riches which claim more; and at the same time they are for ever dependent on the landlord, who gives no leases, nor fears that his land will be spoiled by the ill methods of cultivation. In England, the land is rich but coarse; must be cultivated at a great expense; and produces slender crops, when not carefully managed, and by a method which gives not the full profit but in a course of several years. A farmer, therefore, in England must have a considerable stock, and a long lease; which beget proportional profits. The vineyards of Champagne and Burgundy, that often yield to the landlord above five pounds per acre, are cultivated by peasants who have scarcely bread: The reason is, that peasants need no stock but their own limbs, with instruments of husbandry, which they can buy for twenty shillings. The farmers are commonly in some better circumstances in those countries. But the graziers are most at their ease of all those who cultivate the land. The reason is still the same. Men must have profits proportionable to their expense and hazard. Where so considerable a number of the labouring poor, as the peasants and farmers, are in very low circumstances, all the rest must partake of their poverty, whether the government of that nation be monarchical or republican.

We may form a similar remark with regard to the general history of mankind. What is the reason, why no people, living between the tropics, could ever yet attain to any art or civility, or reach even any police in their government, and any military discipline; while few nations in the temperate climates have been

altogether deprived of these advantages? It is probable that one cause of this phenomenon is the warmth and equality of weather in the torrid zone, which render clothes and houses less requisite for the inhabitants, and thereby remove, in part, that necessity, which is the great spur to industry and invention. *Curis acuens mortalia corda*. Not to mention, that the fewer goods or possessions of this kind any people enjoy, the fewer quarrels are likely to arise amongst them, and the less necessity will there be for a settled police or regular authority, to protect and defend them from foreign enemies, or from each other.

## ESSAY XI.

### OF MONEY.

MONEY is not, properly speaking, one of the subjects of commerce; but only the instrument which men have agreed upon to facilitate the exchange of one commodity for another. It is none of the wheels of trade: It is the oil, which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and easy. If we consider any one kingdom by itself, it is evident, that the greater or less plenty of money is of no consequence; since the prices of commodities are always proportioned to the plenty of money, and a crown in Harry VII.'s time served the same purpose as a pound does at present. It is only the *public* which draws any advantage from the greater plenty of money; and that only in its wars and negotiations with foreign states. And this is the reason why all rich and trading countries, from Carthage to Great Britain and Holland, have employed mercenary troops, which they hired from their poorer neighbours. Were they to make use of their native subjects, they would find less advantage from their superior riches, and from their great plenty of gold and silver; since the pay of all their servants must rise in proportion to the public opulence. Our small army of 20,000 men is maintained at as great expense as a French army twice as numerous. The English fleet, during the late war, required as much money to support it as all the Roman legions, which kept the whole world in subjection, during the time of the emperors\*.

The great number of people, and their greater industry, are serviceable in all cases; at home and abroad, in private and in public. But the greater plenty of money is very limited in its use, and may even sometimes be a loss to a nation in its commerce with foreigners.

There seems to be a happy concurrence of causes in human

\* See NOTE [J.]

affairs, which checks the growth of trade and riches, and hinders them from being confined entirely to one people; as might naturally at first be dreaded from the advantages of an established commerce. Where one nation has gotten the start of another in trade, it is very difficult for the latter to regain the ground it has lost; because of the superior industry and skill of the former, and the greater stocks of which its merchants are possessed, and which enable them to trade on so much smaller profits. But these advantages are compensated, in some measure, by the low price of labour in every nation which has not an extensive commerce, and does not much abound in gold and silver. Manufactures, therefore, gradually shift their places, leaving those countries and provinces which they have already enriched, and flying to others, whither they are allured by the cheapness of provisions and labour; till they have enriched these also, and are again banished by the same causes. And in general we may observe, that the dearness of every thing, from plenty of money, is a disadvantage, which attends an established commerce, and sets bounds to it in every country, by enabling the poorer states to undersell the richer in all foreign markets.

This has made me entertain a doubt concerning the benefit of *banks* and *paper-credit*, which are so generally esteemed advantageous to every nation. That provisions and labour should become dear by the increase of trade and money, is, in many respects, an inconvenience; but an inconvenience that is unavoidable, and the effect of that public wealth and prosperity which are the end of all our wishes. It is compensated by the advantages which we reap from the possession of these precious metals, and the weight which they give the nation in all foreign wars and negotiations. But there appears no reason for increasing that inconvenience by a counterfeit money, which foreigners will not accept of in any payment, and which any great disorder in the state will reduce to nothing. There are, it is true, many people in every rich state, who having large sums of money, would prefer paper with good security; as being of more easy transport and more safe custody. If the public provide not a bank, private bankers will take advantage of this circumstance, as the goldsmiths formerly did in London, or as the bankers do at present in Dublin: And therefore it is better, it may be thought, that a public company should enjoy the benefit of that paper-credit, which always will have place in every opulent kingdom. But to endeavour artificially to increase such a credit, can never be the interest of any trading nation; but must lay them under disadvantages, by increasing money beyond its natural proportion to labour and commodities, and thereby heightening their price to the merchant and manufacturer. And in this view, it must be allowed, that no

bank could be more advantageous than such a one as locked up all the money it received\*, and never augmented the circulating coin, as is usual by returning part of its treasure into commerce. A public bank, by this expedient, might cut off much of the dealings of private bankers and money-jobbers: and though the state bore the charge of salaries to the directors and tellers of this bank, (for, according to the preceeding supposition, it would have no profit from its dealings), the national advantage, resulting from the low price of labour and the destruction of paper-credit, would be a sufficient compensation. Not to mention, that so large a sum, lying ready at command, would be a convenience in times of great public danger and distress; and what part of it was used might be replaced at leisure, when peace and tranquillity was restored to the nation.

But of this subject of paper-credit we shall treat more largely hereafter. And I shall finish this essay on money, by proposing and explaining two observations, which may perhaps serve to employ the thoughts of our speculative politicians.

It was a shrewd observation of Anacharsis † the Scythian, who had never seen money in his own country, that gold and silver seemed to him of no use to the Greeks, but to assist them in numeration and arithmetic. It is indeed evident, that money is nothing but the representation of labour and commodities, and serves only as a method of rating or estimating them. Where coin is in greater plenty, as a greater quantity of it is required to represent the same quantity of goods, it can have no effect, either good or bad, taking a nation within itself; any more than it would make an alteration on a merchant's books, if, instead of the Arabian method of notation, which requires few characters, he should make use of the Roman, which requires a great many. Nay, the greater quantity of money, like the Roman characters, is rather inconvenient, and requires greater trouble both to keep and transport it. But, notwithstanding this conclusion, which must be allowed just, it is certain, that, since the discovery of the mines in America, industry has increased in all the nations of Europe, except in the possessors of those mines; and this may justly be ascribed, amongst other reasons, to the increase of gold and silver. Accordingly we find, that, in every kingdom into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face: Labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention. This is not easily to be accounted for, if we consider only the influence which a greater

\* This is the case with the bank of Amsterdam.

† Plut., *Quomodo quis suos profectus in virtute sentire possit.*

abundance of coin has in the kingdom itself, by heightening the price of commodities, and obliging every one to pay a greater number of these little yellow or white pieces for every thing he purchases. And as to foreign trade, it appears, that great plenty of money is rather disadvantageous, by raising the price of every kind of labour.

To account, then, for this phenomenon, we must consider, that though the high price of commodities be a necessary consequence of the increase of gold and silver, yet it follows not immediately upon that increase; but some time is required before the money circulates through the whole state, and makes its effect be felt on all ranks of people. At first, no alteration is perceived; by degrees the price rises, first of one commodity, then of another; till the whole at last reaches a just proportion with the new quantity of specie which is in the kingdom. In my opinion, it is only in this interval or intermediate situation, between the acquisition of money and rise of prices, that the increasing quantity of gold and silver is favourable to industry. When any quantity of money is imported into a nation, it is not at first dispersed into many hands; but is confined to the coffers of a few persons, who immediately seek to employ it to advantage. Here are a set of manufacturers or merchants, we shall suppose, who have received returns of gold and silver for goods which they sent to Cadiz. They are thereby enabled to employ more workmen than formerly, who never dream of demanding higher wages, but are glad of employment from such good paymasters. If workmen become scarce, the manufacturer gives higher wages, but at first requires an increase of labour; and this is willingly submitted to by the artisan, who can now eat and drink better, to compensate his additional toil and fatigue. He carries his money to market, where he finds every thing at the same price as formerly, but returns with greater quantity, and of better kinds, for the use of his family. The farmer and gardener, finding that all their commodities are taken off, apply themselves with alacrity to the raising more; and at the same time can afford to take better and more clothes from their tradesmen, whose price is the same as formerly, and their industry only whetted by so much new gain. It is easy to trace the money in its progress through the whole commonwealth; where we shall find, that it must first quicken the diligence of every individual, before it increase the price of labour.

And that the specie may increase to a considerable pitch, before it have this latter effect, appears, amongst other instances, from the frequent operations of the French king on the money; where it was always found, that the augmenting of the numerary value did not produce a proportional rise of the prices, at least



for some time. In the last year of Louis XIV. money was raised three-sevenths, but prices augmented only one. Corn in France is now sold at the same price, or for the same number of livres, it was in 1632; though silver was then at 30 livres the mark, and is now at 50\*. Not to mention the great addition of gold and silver, which may have come into that kingdom since the former period.

From the whole of this reasoning we may conclude, that it is of no manner of consequence with regard to the domestic happiness of a state, whether money be in a greater or less quantity. The good policy of the magistrate consists only in keeping it, if possible, still increasing; because by that means he keeps alive a spirit of industry in the nation, and increases the stock of labour in which consists all real power and riches. A nation, whose money decreases, is actually at that time weaker and more miserable than another nation which possesses no more money, but is on the increasing hand. This will be easily accounted for, if we consider that the alterations in the quantity of money, either on one side or the other, are not immediately attended with proportionable alterations in the price of commodities. There is always an interval before matters be adjusted to their new situation; and this interval is as pernicious to industry, when gold and silver are diminishing, as it is advantageous when these metals are increasing. The workman has not the same employment from the manufacturer and merchant; though he pays the same price for every thing in the market. The farmer cannot dispose of his corn and cattle, though he must pay the same rent to his landlord. The poverty and beggary and sloth, which must ensue, are easily foreseen.

II. The second observation which I proposed to make with regard to money, may be explained after the following manner: There are some kingdoms, and many provinces in Europe, (and all of them were once in the same condition), where money is so scarce, that the landlord can get none at all from his tenants, but is obliged to take his rent in kind, and either to consume it himself, or transport it to places where he may find a market. In those countries, the prince can levy few or no taxes but in the same manner; and as he will receive small benefit from impositions so paid, it is evident that such a kingdom has little force even at home, and cannot maintain fleets and armies to the same extent as if every part of it abounded in gold and silver. There is surely a greater disproportion between the force of Germany at present, and what it was three centuries ago†, than

\* See NOTE [K.]

† The Italians gave to the emperor Maximilian the nickname of POCCHI-DANARI. None of the enterprises of that Prince ever succeeded, for want of money.

there is in its industry, people, and manufactures. The Austrian dominions in the empire are in general well peopled and well cultivated, and are of great extent, but have not a proportionable weight in the balance of Europe; proceeding, as is commonly supposed, from the scarcity of money. How do all these facts agree with that principle of reason, that the quantity of gold and silver is in itself altogether indifferent? According to that principle, wherever a sovereign has numbers of subjects, and these have plenty of commodities, he should of course be great and powerful, and they rich and happy, independent of the greater or lesser abundance of the precious metals. These admit of divisions and subdivisions to a great extent; and where the pieces might become so small as to be in danger of being lost, it is easy to mix the gold or silver with a baser metal, as is practised in some countries of Europe, and by that means raise the pieces to a bulk more sensible and convenient. They still serve the same purposes of exchange, whatever their number may be, or whatever colour they may be supposed to have.

To these difficulties I answer, that the effect here supposed to flow from scarcity of money, really arises from the manners and customs of the people; and that we mistake, as is too usual, a collateral effect for a cause. The contradiction is only apparent; but it requires some thought and reflection to discover the principles by which we can reconcile *reason* to *experience*.

It seems a maxim almost self-evident, that the prices of every thing depend on the proportion between commodities and money, and that any considerable alteration on either has the same effect, either of heightening or lowering the price. Increase the commodities, they become cheaper; increase the money, they rise in their value. As, on the other hand, a diminution of the former, and that of the latter, have contrary tendencies.

It is also evident, that the prices do not so much depend on the absolute quantity of commodities and that of money which are in a nation, as on that of the commodities which come or may come into market, and of the money which circulates. If the coin be locked up in chests, it is the same thing with regard to prices, as if it were annihilated; if the commodities be hoarded in magazines and granaries, a like effect follows. As the money and commodities, in these cases, never meet, they cannot affect each other. Were we, at any time, to form conjectures concerning the price of provisions, the corn, which the farmer must reserve for seed, and for the maintenance of himself and family, ought never to enter into estimation. It is only the overplus, compared to the demand, that determines the value.

To apply these principles, we must consider, that in the first and more uncultivated ages of any state, ere fancy has confounded

her wants with those of nature, men, content with the produce of their own fields, or with those rude improvements which they themselves can work upon them, have little occasion for exchange, at least for money, which, by agreement, is the common measure of exchange. The wool of the farmer's own flock, spun in his own family, and wrought by a neighbouring weaver, who receives his payment in corn or wool, suffices for furniture and clothing. The carpenter, the smith, the mason, the tailor, are retained by wages of a like nature; and the landlord himself, dwelling in the neighbourhood, is content to receive his rent in the commodities raised by the farmer. The greater part of these he consumes at home, in rustic hospitality: The rest, perhaps, he disposes of for money to the neighbouring town, whence he draws the few materials of his expense and luxury.

But after men begin to refine on all these enjoyments, and live not always at home, nor are content with what can be raised in their neighbourhood, there is more exchange and commerce of all kinds, and more money enters into that exchange. The tradesmen will not be paid in corn, because they want something more than barely to eat. The farmer goes beyond his own parish for the commodities he purchases, and cannot always carry his commodities to the merchant who supplies him. The landlord lives in the capital, or in a foreign country; and demands his rent in gold and silver, which can easily be transported to him. Great undertakers, and manufacturers, and merchants, arise in every commodity; and these can conveniently deal in nothing but in specie. And consequently, in this situation of society, the coin enters into many more contracts, and by that means is much more employed than in the former.

The necessary effect is, that provided the money increase not in the nation, every thing must become much cheaper in times of industry and refinement, than in rude uncultivated ages. It is the proportion between the circulating money, and the commodities in the market, which determines the prices. Goods that are consumed at home, or exchanged with other goods in the neighbourhood, never come to market; they affect not in the least the current specie; with regard to it they are as if totally annihilated, and consequently this method of using them sinks the proportion on the side of the commodities, and increases the prices. But after money enters into all contracts and sales, and is every where the measure of exchange, the same national cash has a much greater task to perform; all commodities are then in the market: the sphere of circulation is enlarged; it is the same case as if that individual sum were to serve a larger kingdom; and therefore, the proportion being here lessened on the side of the money, every thing must become cheaper, and the prices gradually fall.

By the most exact computations that have been formed all over Europe, after making allowance for the alteration in the numerary value or the denomination, it is found, that the prices of all things have only risen three, or, at most, four times since the discovery of the West Indies. But will any one assert, that there is not much more than four times the coin in Europe, that was in the fifteenth century, and the centuries preceding it? The Spaniards and Portuguese from their mines, the English, French, and Dutch, by their African trade, and by their interlopers in the West Indies, bring home about six millions a-year, of which not above a third goes to the East Indies. This sum alone, in ten years, would probably double the ancient stock of money in Europe. And no other satisfactory reason can be given, why all prices have not risen to a much more exorbitant height, except that which is derived from a change of customs and manners. Besides that more commodities are produced by additional industry, the same commodities come more to market, after men depart from their ancient simplicity of manners. And though this increase has not been equal to that of money, it has, however, been considerable, and has preserved the proportion between coin and commodities nearer the ancient standard.

Were the question proposed, Which of these methods of living in the people, the simple or refined, is the most advantageous to the state or public? I should, without much scruple, prefer the latter, in a view to politics at least; and should produce this as an additional reason for the encouragement of trade and manufactures.

While men live in the ancient simple manner, and supply all their necessities from domestic industry, or from the neighbourhood, the sovereign can levy no taxes in money from a considerable part of his subjects; and if he will impose on them any burdens, he must take payment in commodities, with which alone they abound; a method attended with such great and obvious inconveniences, that they need not here be insisted on. All the money he can pretend to raise must be from his principal cities, where alone it circulates; and these, it is evident, cannot afford him so much as the whole state could, did gold and silver circulate throughout the whole. But besides this obvious diminution of the revenue, there is another cause of the poverty of the public in such a situation. Not only the sovereign receives less money, but the same money goes not so far as in times of industry and general commerce. Every thing is dearer where the gold and silver are supposed equal; and that because fewer commodities come to market, and the whole coin bears a higher proportion to what is to be purchased by it; whence alone the prices of every thing are fixed and determined.

Here then we may learn the fallacy of the remark, often to be met with in historians, and even in common conversation, that any particular state is weak, though fertile, populous, and well cultivated, merely because it wants money. It appears, that the want of money can never injure any state within itself ; for men and commodities are the real strength of any community. It is the simple manner of living which here hurts the public, by confining the gold and silver to few hands, and preventing its universal diffusion and circulation. On the contrary, industry and refinements of all kinds incorporate it with the whole state, however small its quantity may be : They digest it into every vein, so to speak ; and make it enter into every transaction and contract. No hand is entirely empty of it. And as the prices of every thing fall by that means, the sovereign has a double advantage : He may draw money by his taxes from every part of the state ; and what he receives, goes farther in every purchase and payment.

We may infer, from a comparison of prices, that money is not more plentiful in China than it was in Europe three centuries ago : But what immense power is that empire possessed of, if we may judge by the civil and military establishment maintained by it ? Polybius\* tells us, that provisions were so cheap in Italy during his time, that in some places the stated price for a meal at the inns was a *semis* a-head, little more than a farthing ! Yet the Roman power had even then subdued the whole known world. About a century before that period, the Carthaginian ambassador said, by way of raillery, that no people lived more sociably amongst themselves than the Romans ; for that, in every entertainment, which, as foreign ministers, they received, they still observed the same plate at every table†. The absolute quantity of the precious metals is a matter of great indifference. There are only two circumstances of any importance, namely, their gradual increase, and their thorough concoction and circulation through the state ; and the influence of both those circumstances has here been explained.

In the following essay we shall see an instance of a like fallacy, as that above mentioned ; where a collateral effect is taken for a cause, and where a consequence is ascribed to the plenty of money ; though it be really owing to a change in the manners and customs of the people.

\* Lib. ii. cap. 15.

† Plin. lib. xxxiii. cap. 11.

## ESSAY XII.

## OF INTEREST.

NOTHING is esteemed a more certain sign of the flourishing condition of any nation than the lowness of interest : And with reason ; though I believe the cause is somewhat different from what is commonly apprehended. Lowness of interest is generally ascribed to plenty of money. But money, however plentiful, has no other effect, *if fixed*, than to raise the price of labour. Silver is more common than gold ; and therefore you receive a greater quantity of it for the same commodities. But do you pay less interest for it ? Interest in Batavia and Jamaica is at 10 *per cent.*, in Portugal at 6 ; though these places, as we may learn from the prices of every thing, abound more in gold and silver than either London or Amsterdam.

Were all the gold in England annihilated at once, and one and twenty shillings substituted in the place of every guinea, would money be more plentiful, or interest lower ? No, surely : We should only use silver instead of gold. Were gold rendered as common as silver, and silver as common as copper ; would money be more plentiful or interest lower ? We may assuredly give the same answer. Our shillings would then be yellow, and our halfpence white ; and we should have no guineas. No other difference would ever be observed ; no alteration on commerce, manufactures, navigation, or interest ; unless we imagine that the colour of the metal is of any consequence.

Now, what is so visible in these greater variations of scarcity or abundance in the precious metals must hold in all inferior changes. If the multiplying of gold and silver fifteen times makes no difference, much less can the doubling or tripling them. All augmentation has no other effect than to heighten the price of labour and commodities ; and even this variation is little more than that of a name. In the progress towards these changes, the augmentation may have some influence, by exciting industry ; but after the prices are settled, suitably to the new abundance of gold and silver, it has no manner of influence.

An effect always holds proportion with its cause. Prices have risen near four times since the discovery of the Indies ; and it is probable gold and silver have multiplied much more. But interest has not fallen much above half. The rate of interest therefore, is not derived from the quantity of the precious metals.

Money having chiefly a fictitious value, the greater or less plenty of it is of no consequence, if we consider a nation within itself ; and the quantity of specie, when once fixed, though ever so large, has no other effect, than to oblige every one to tell out a greater

number of those shining bits of metal, for clothes, furniture, or equipage, without increasing any one convenience of life. If a man borrow money to build a house, he then carries home a greater load; because the stone, timber, lead, glass, &c. with the labour of the masons and carpenters, are represented by a greater quantity of gold and silver. But as these metals are considered chiefly as representations, there can no alteration arise, from their bulk or quantity, their weight or colour, either upon their real value or their interest. The same interest, in all cases, bears the same proportion to the sum. And if you lent me so much labour and so many commodities; by receiveing five *per cent.* you always receive proportional labour and commodities, however represented, whether by yellow or white coin, whether by a pound or an ounce. It is in vain, therefore, to look for the cause of the fall or rise of interest in the greater or less quantity of gold and silver, which is fixed in any nation.

High interest arises from *three* circumstances: A great demand for borrowing; little riches to supply that demand; and great profits arising from commerce: And the circumstances are a clear proof of the small advance of commerce and industry, not of the scarcity of gold and silver. Low interest, on the other hand, proceeds from the three opposite circumstances: A small demand for borrowing; great riches to supply that demand; and small profits arising from commerce: And these circumstances are all connected together, and proceed from the increase of industry and commerce, not of gold and silver. We shall endeavour to prove these points; and shall begin with the causes and the effects of a greater or small demand for borrowing.

When a people have emerged ever so little from a savage state, and their numbers have increased beyond the original multitude, there must immediately arise an inequality of property; and while some possess large tracts of land, others are confined within narrow limits, and some are entirely without any landed property. Those who possess more land than they can labour, employ those who possess none, and agree to receive a determinate part of the product. Thus the *landed* interest is immediately established; nor is there any settled government, however rude, in which affairs are not on this footing. Of these proprietors of land, some must presently discover themselves to be of different tempers from others; and while one would willingly store up the produce of his land for futurity, another desires to consume at present what should suffice for many years. But as the spending of a settled revenue is a way of life entirely without occupation; men have so much need of somewhat to fix and engage them, that pleasures, such as they are, will be the pursuit of the greater part of the landholders, and the prodigals among them will always be

more numerous than the misers. In a state, therefore, where there is nothing but a landed interest, as there is little frugality, the borrowers must be very numerous, and the rate of interest must hold proportion to it. The difference depends not on the quantity of money, but on the habits and manners which prevail. By this alone the demand for borrowing is increased or diminished. Were money so plentiful as to make an egg be sold for sixpence ; so long as there are only landed gentry and peasants in the state, the borrowers must be numerous, and interest high. The rent for the same farm would be heavier and more bulky : But the same idleness of the landlord, with the high price of commodities, would dissipate it in the same time, and produce the same necessity and demand for borrowing.

Nor is the case different with regard to the *second* circumstance which we proposed to consider, namely, the great or little riches to supply the demand. This effect also depends on the habits and way of living of the people, not on the quantity of gold and silver. In order to have, in any state, a greater number of lenders, it is not sufficient nor requisite, that there be great abundance of the precious metals. It is only requisite, that the property or command of that quantity, which is in the state, whether great or small, should be collected in particular hands, so as to form considerable sums, or compose a great moneyed interest. This begets a number of lenders, and sinks the rate of usury ; and this, I shall venture to affirm, depends not on the quantity of specie, but on particular manners and customs, which make the specie gather into separate sums or masses of considerable value.

For suppose that, by miracle, every man in Great Britain should have five pounds slipt into his pocket in one night ; this would, much more than double the whole money that is at present in the kingdom ; yet there would not next day, nor for some time, be any more lenders, nor any variation in the interest. And were there nothing but landlords and peasants in the state, this money, however abundant, could never gather into sums ; and would only serve to increase the prices of every thing, without any farther consequence. The prodigal landlord dissipates it, as fast as he receives it ; and the beggarly peasant has no means, nor view, nor ambition of obtaining above a bare livelihood. The overplus of borrowers above that of lenders continuing still the same, there will follow no reduction of interest. That depends upon another principle ; and must proceed from an increase of industry and frugality, of arts and commerce.

Every thing useful to the life of man arises from the ground ; but few things arise in that condition which is requisite to render them useful. There must, therefore, beside the peasants and the



proprietors of land, be another rank of men, who, receiving from the former the rude materials, work them into their proper form, and retain part for their own use and subsistence. In the infancy of society, these contracts between the artisans and the peasants, and between one species of artisans and another, are commonly entered into immediately by the persons themselves, who being neighbours, are easily acquainted with each other's necessities, and can lend their mutual assistance to supply them. But when men's industry increases, and their views enlarge, it is found, that the most remote parts of the state can assist each other as well as the more contiguous, and that this intercourse of good offices may be carried on to the greatest extent and intricacy. Hence the origin of *merchants*, one of the most useful races of men, who serve as agents between those parts of the state that are wholly unacquainted, and are ignorant of each other's necessities. Here are in a city fifty workmen in silk and linen, and a thousand customers; and these two ranks of men, so necessary to each other, can never rightly meet, till one man erects a shop, to which all the workmen and all the customers repair. In this province, grass rises in abundance: The inhabitants abound in cheese, and butter, and cattle; but want bread and corn, which, in a neighbouring province, are in too great abundance for the use of the inhabitants. One man discovers this. He brings corn from the one province, and returns with cattle; and, supplying the wants of both, he is, so far, a common benefactor. As the people increase in numbers and industry, the difficulty of their intercourse increases: The business of the agency or merchandise becomes more intricate; and divides, subdivides, compounds, and mixes to a greater variety. In all these transactions it is necessary, and reasonable, that a considerable part of the commodities and labour should belong to the merchant, to whom, in a great measure, they are owing. And these commodities he will sometimes preserve in kind, or more commonly convert into money, which is their common representation. If gold and silver have increased in the state together with industry, it will require a great quantity of these metals to represent a great quantity of commodities and labour. If industry alone has increased, the prices of every thing must sink, and a small quantity of specie will serve as a representation.

There is no craving or demand of the human mind more constant and insatiable than that for exercise and employment; and this desire seems the foundation of most of our passions and pursuits. Deprive a man of all business and serious occupation, he runs restless from one amusement to another; and the weight and oppression which he feels from idleness is so great, that he forgets the ruin which must follow him from his immoderate ex-

pences. Give him a more harmless way of employing his mind or body, he is satisfied, and feels no longer that insatiable thirst after pleasure. But if the employment you give him be lucrative, especially if the profit be attached to every particular exertion of industry, he has gain so often in his eye, that he acquires, by degrees, a passion for it, and knows no such pleasure as that of seeing the daily increase of his fortune. And this is the reason why trade increases frugality, and why, among merchants, there is the same overplus of misers above prodigals, as among the possessors of land there is the contrary.

Commerce increases industry, by conveying it readily from one member of the state to another, and allowing none of it to perish or become useless. It increases frugality, by giving occupation to men, and employing them in the arts of gain, which soon engage their affection, and remove all relish for pleasure and expense. It is an infallible consequence of all industrious professions to beget frugality, and make the love of gain prevail over the love of pleasure. Among lawyers and physicians who have any practice, there are many more who live within their income, than who exceed it, or even live up to it. But lawyers and physicians beget no industry; and it is even at the expense of others they acquire their riches; so that they are sure to diminish the possessions of some of their fellow-citizens, as fast as they increase their own. Merchants, on the contrary, beget industry, by serving as canals to convey it through every corner of the state: And at the same time, by their frugality, they acquire great power over that industry, and collect a large property in the labour and commodities, which they are the chief instruments in producing. There is no other profession, therefore, except merchandise, which can make the moneyed interest considerable, or, in other words, can increase industry, and, by also increasing frugality, give a great command of that industry to particular members of the society. Without commerce, the state must consist chiefly of landed gentry, whose prodigality and expense make a continual demand for borrowing; and of peasants, who have no sums to supply that demand. The money never gathers into large stocks or sums, which can be lent at interest. It is dispersed into numberless hands, who either squander it in idle shew and magnificence, or employ it in the purchase of the common necessities of life. Commerce alone assembles it into considerable sums; and this effect it has merely from the industry which it begets, and the frugality which it inspires, independent of that particular quantity of precious metal which may circulate in the state.

Thus an increase of commerce, by a necessary consequence, raises a great number of lenders, and by that means produces lowness of interest. We must now consider how far this increase

of commerce diminishes the profits arising from that profession, and gives rise to the *third* circumstance requisite to produce lowness of interest.

It may be proper to observe on this head, that low interest and low profits of merchandise, are two events that mutually forward each other, and are both originally derived from that extensive commerce, which produces opulent merchants, and renders the moneyed interest considerable. Where merchants possess great stocks, whether represented by few or many pieces of metal, it must frequently happen, that, when they either become tired of business, or leave heirs unwilling or unfit to engage in commerce, a great proportion of these riches naturally seeks an annual and secure revenue. The plenty diminishes the price, and makes the lenders accept of a low interest. This consideration obliges many to keep their stock employed in trade, and rather be content with low profits, than dispose of their money at an under-value. On the other hand, when commerce has become extensive, and employs large stocks, there must arise rivalships among the merchants, which diminish the profits of trade, at the same time that they increase the trade itself. The low profits of merchandise induce the merchants to accept more willingly of a low interest, when they leave off business, and begin to indulge themselves in ease and indolence. It is needless, therefore, to inquire which of these circumstances, to wit, *low interest*, or *low profits*, is the cause, and which the effect? They both arise from an extensive commerce, and mutually forward each other. No man will accept of low profits where he can have high interest; and no man will accept of low interest where he can have high profits. An extensive commerce, by producing large stocks, diminishes both interest and profits; and is always assisted, in its diminution of the one, by the proportional sinking of the other. I may add, that, as low profits arise from the increase of commerce and industry, they serve in their turn to its farther increase, by rendering the commodities cheaper, encouraging the consumption, and heightening the industry. And thus, if we consider the whole connection of causes and effects, interest is the barometer of the state, and its lowness is a sign almost infallible of the flourishing condition of a people. It proves the increase of industry, and its prompt circulation, through the whole state, little inferior to a demonstration. And though, perhaps, it may not be impossible but a sudden and a great check to commerce may have a momentary effect of the same kind, by throwing so many stocks out of trade; it must be attended with such misery and want of employment to the poor, that, besides its short duration, it will not be possible to mistake the one case for the other.

Those who have asserted, that the plenty of money was the

cause of low interest, seem to have taken a collateral effect for a cause; since the same industry, which sinks the interest, commonly acquires great abundance of the precious metals. A variety of fine manufactures, with vigilant enterprising merchants, will soon draw money to a state, if it be any where to be found in the world. The same cause, by multiplying the conveniences of life, and increasing industry, collects great riches into the hands of persons, who are not proprietors of land, and produces, by that means, a lowness of interest. But though both these effects, plenty of money and low interest, naturally arise from commerce and industry, they are altogether independent of each other. For suppose a nation removed into the *Pacific* Ocean, without any foreign commerce, or any knowledge of navigation: Suppose that this nation possesses always the same stock of coin, but is continually increasing in its numbers and industry: It is evident, that the price of every commodity must gradually diminish in that kingdom; since it is the proportion between money and any species of goods which fixes their mutual value; and, upon the present supposition, the conveniences of life become every day more abundant, without any alteration in the current specie. A less quantity of money, therefore, among this people, will make a rich man, during the times of industry, than would suffice to that purpose, in ignorant and slothful ages. Less money will build a house, portion a daughter, buy an estate, support a manufactory, or maintain a family and equipage. These are the uses for which men borrow money; and therefore, the greater or less quantity of it in a state has no influence on the interest. But it is evident, that the greater or less stock of labour and commodities must have a great influence; since we really and in effect borrow these, when we take money upon interest. It is true, when commerce is extended all over the globe, the most industrious nations always abound most with the precious metals; so that low interest and plenty of money are in fact almost inseparable. But still it is of consequence to know the principle whence any phenomenon arises, and to distinguish between a cause and a concomitant effect. Besides that the speculation is curious, it may frequently be of use in the conduct of public affairs. At least, it must be owned, that nothing can be of more use than to improve, by practice, the method of reasoning on these subjects, which of all others are the most important; though they are commonly treated in the loosest and most careless manner.

Another reason of this popular mistake with regard to the cause of low interest, seems to be the instance of some nations, where, after a sudden acquisition of money, or of the precious metals by means of foreign conquest, the interest has fallen not

only among them, but in all the neighbouring states, as soon as that money was dispersed, and had insinuated itself into every corner. Thus, interest in Spain fell near a half immediately after the discovery of the West Indies, as we are informed by Garcilasso de la Vega; and it has been ever since gradually sinking in every kingdom of Europe. Interest in Rome, after the conquest of Egypt, fell from 6 to 4 *per cent.* as we learn from Dion\*.

The causes of the sinking of interest, upon such an event, seem different in the conquering country and in the neighbouring states; but in neither of them can we justly ascribe that effect merely to the increase of gold and silver.

In the conquering country, it is natural to imagine, that this new acquisition of money will fall into a few hands, and be gathered into large sums, which seek a secure revenue, either by the purchase of land, or by interest; and consequently the same effect follows, for a little time, as if there had been a great accession of industry and commerce. The increase of lenders above the borrowers sinks the interest, and so much the faster, if those who have acquired those large sums find no industry or commerce in the state, and no method of employing their money but by lending it at interest. But after this new mass of gold and silver has been digested, and has circulated through the whole state, affairs will soon return to their former situation, while the landlords and new money-holders, living idly, squander above their income; and the former daily contract debt, and the latter encroach on their stock till its final extinction. The whole money may still be in the state, and make itself felt by the increase of prices; but not being now collected into any large masses or stocks, the disproportion between the borrowers and lenders is the same as formerly, and consequently the high interest returns.

Accordingly we find in Rome, that, so early as Tiberius's time, interest had again mounted to 6 *per cent.*† though no accident had happened to drain the empire of money. In Trajan's time, money lent on mortgages in Italy bore 6 *per cent.*‡, on common securities in Bithynia 12||; and if interest in Spain has not risen to its old pitch, this can be ascribed to nothing but the continuance of the same cause that sunk it, to wit, the large fortunes continually made in the Indies, which come over to Spain from time to time, and supply the demand of the borrowers. By this accidental and extraneous cause, more money is to be lent in Spain, that is, more money is collected into large sums, than would otherwise be found in a state, where there are so little commerce and industry.

\* Lib. ii.

† Columella, lib. iii. cap. 3.

‡ Plinii Epist. lib. vii. ep. 18.

|| Id. lib. x. ep. 62.

As to the reduction of interest which has followed in England France, and other kingdoms of Europe that have no mines, it has been gradual, and has not proceeded from the increase of money, considered merely in itself, but from that industry, which is the natural effect of the former increase in that interval, before it raises the prices of labour and provisions; for to return to the foregoing supposition, if the industry of England had risen as much from other causes, (and that rise might easily have happened, though the stock of money had remained the same) must not all the same consequences have followed, which we observe at present? The same people would in that case be found in the kingdom, the same commodities, the same industry, manufactures, and commerce; and consequently the same merchants, with the same stocks, that is, with the same command over labour and commodities, only represented by a smaller number of white or yellow pieces, which being a circumstance of no moment, would only affect the waggoner, porter, and trunk-maker. Luxury, therefore, manufactures, arts, industry, frugality, flourishing equally as at present, it is evident, that interest must also have been as low, since that is the necessary result of all these circumstances, so far as they determine the profits of commerce, and the proportion between the borrowers and lenders in any state.

## ESSAY XIII.

### OF THE BALANCE OF TRADE.

It is very usual, in nations ignorant of the nature of commerce, to prohibit the exportation of commodities, and to preserve among themselves whatever they think valuable and useful. They do not consider, that in this prohibition they act directly contrary to their intention; and that the more there is exported of any commodity, the more will be raised at home, of which they themselves will always have the first offer.

It is well known to the learned, that the ancient laws of Athens rendered the exportation of figs criminal; that being supposed a species of fruit so excellent in Attica, that the Athenians deemed it too delicious for the palate of any foreigner; and in this ridiculous prohibition they were so much in earnest, that informers were thence called *sycophants* among them, from two Greek words, which signify *figs* and *discoverer*\*. There are proofs in many old acts of parliament of the same ignorance in the nature of commerce, particularly in the reign of Edward III.; and to this day, in France, the exportation of corn is almost always prohibited, in order, as they say, to prevent famines; though it is evident, that

\* PLUT De Curiositate.

nothing contributes more to the frequent famines, which so much distress that fertile country.

The same jealous fear, with regard to money, has also prevailed among several nations ; and it required both reason and experience to convince any people, that these prohibitions serve to no other purpose than to raise the exchange against them, and produce a still greater exportation.

These errors, one may say, are gross and palpable ; but there still prevails, even in nations well acquainted with commerce, a strong jealousy with regard to the balance of trade, and a fear that all their gold and silver may be leaving them. This seems to me, almost in every case, a groundless apprehension ; and I should as soon dread, that all our springs and rivers should be exhausted, as that money should abandon a kingdom where there are people and industry. Let us carefully preserve these latter advantages, and we need never be apprehensive of losing the former.

It is easy to observe, that all calculations concerning the balance of trade are founded on very uncertain facts and suppositions. The custom-house books are allowed to be an insufficient ground of reasoning ; nor is the rate of exchange much better, unless we consider it with all nations, and know also the proportion of the several sums remitted, which one may safely pronounce impossible. Every man, who has ever reasoned on this subject, has always proved his theory, whatever it was, by facts and calculations, and by an enumeration of all the commodities sent to all foreign kingdoms.

The writings of Mr. Gee struck the nation with an universal panic, when they saw it plainly demonstrated, by a detail of particulars, that the balance was against them for so considerable a sum, as must leave them without a single shilling in five or six years. But luckily, twenty years have since elapsed, with an expensive foreign war ; yet it is commonly supposed, that money is still more plentiful among us than in any former period.

Nothing can be more entertaining or this head than Dr. Swift ; an author so quick in discerning the mistakes and absurdities of others. He says, in his *Short View of the State of Ireland*, that the whole cash of that kingdom formerly amounted but to L. 500,000 ; that out of this the Irish remitted every year a neat million to England, and had scarcely any other source from which they could compensate themselves, and little other foreign trade, than the importation of French wines, for which they paid ready money. The consequence of this situation, which must be owned to be disadvantageous, was, that, in a course of three years, the current money of Ireland, from L.500,000, was reduced at least two : And at present, I suppose, in a course of thirty years, it is absolutely nothing. Yet I know not how that opinion of the

advance of riches in Ireland, which gave the Doctor so much indignation, seems still to continue, and gain ground with every body.

In short, this apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits; and as it can never be refuted by a particular detail of all the exports which counterbalance the imports, it may here be proper to form a general argument, that may prove the impossibility of this event, so long as we preserve our people and our industry.

Suppose four-fifths of all the money in Great Britain to be annihilated in one night, and the nation reduced to the same condition, with regard to specie, as in the reigns of the Harrys and Edwards, what would be the consequence? Must not the price of all labour and commodities sink in proportion, and every thing be sold as cheap as they were in those ages? What nation could then dispute with us in any foreign market, or pretend to navigate or to sell manufactures at the same price, which to us would afford sufficient profit? In how little time, therefore, must this bring back the money which we had lost, and raise us to the level of all the neighbouring nations? where, after we have arrived, we immediately lose the advantage of the cheapness of labour and commodities; and the farther flowing in of money is stopped by our fulness and repletion.

Again, suppose that all the money of Great Britain were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow? Must not all labour and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; while their commodities, on the other hand, become comparatively so cheap, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out; till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches, which had laid us under such disadvantages?

Now, it is evident, that the same causes which would correct these exorbitant inequalities, were they to happen miraculously, must prevent their happening, in the common course of nature, and must for ever, in all neighbouring nations, preserve money nearly proportionable to the art and industry of each nation. All water, wherever it communicates, remains always at a level. Ask naturalists the reason; they tell you, that, were it to be raised in any one place, the superior gravity of that part not being balanced, must depress it, till it meets a counterpoise; and that the same cause, which redresses the inequality when it happens, must for ever prevent it, without some violent external operation\*

\* There is another cause, though more limited in its operation, which checks the wrong balance of trade, to every particular nation to which the kingdom trades. When we import more goods than we export, the exchange turns against us, and this be-



Can one imagine, that it had ever been possible, by any laws, or even by any art or industry, to have kept all the money in Spain, which the galleons have brought from the Indies? Or that all commodities could be sold in France for a tenth of the price which they would yield on the other side of the Pyrenees, without finding their way thither, and draining from that immense treasure? What other reason, indeed, is there, why all nations, at present, gain in their trade with Spain and Portugal; but because it is impossible to heap up money, more than any fluid, beyond its proper level? The sovereigns of these countries have shewn, that they wanted not inclination to keep their gold and silver to themselves, had it been in any degree practicable.

But as any body of water may be raised above the level of the surrounding element, if the former has no communication with the latter; so in money if the communication be cut off, by any material or physical impediment (for all laws alone are ineffectual), there may, in such a case, be a very great inequality of money. Thus the immense distance of China, together with the monopolies of our India companies, obstructing the communication, preserve in Europe the gold and silver, especially the latter, in much greater plenty than they are found in that kingdom. But, notwithstanding this great obstruction, the force of the causes above mentioned is still evident. The skill and ingenuity of Europe in general surpasses perhaps that of China, with regard to manual arts and manufactures, yet are we never able to trade thither without great disadvantage. And were it not for the continued recruits which we receive from America, money would soon sink in Europe, and rise in China, till it came nearly to a level in both places. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that that industrious nation, were they as near us as Poland or Barbary, would drain us of the overplus of our specie, and draw to themselves a larger share of the West India treasures. We need not have recourse to a physical attraction, in order to explain the necessity of this operation. There is a moral attraction, arising from the interests and passions of men, which is full as potent and infallible.

How is the balance kept in the provinces of every kingdom, among themselves, but by the force of this principle, which makes it impossible for money to lose its level, and either to rise or sink beyond the proportion of the labour and commodities which are in each province? Did not long experience make people easy on this head, what a fund of gloomy reflections might calculations afford to a melancholy Yorkshireman, while he com-

comes a new encouragement to export; as much as the charge of carriage and insurance of the money which becomes due would amount to. For the exchange can never rise but a little higher than the sum.

puted and magnified the sums drawn to London by taxes, absentees, commodities, and found on comparison the opposite articles so much inferior? And no doubt, had the *Heptarchy* subsisted in England, the legislature of each state had been continually alarmed by the fear of a wrong balance; and as it is probable that the mutual hatred of these states would have been extremely violent on account of their close neighbourhood, they would have loaded and oppressed all commerce, by a jealous and superfluous caution. Since the union has removed the barriers between Scotland and England, which of these nations gains from the other by this free commerce? Or if the former kingdom has received any increase of riches, can it reasonably be accounted for by any thing but the increase of its art and industry? It was a common apprehension in England, before the Union, as we learn from L'Abbé du Bois,\* that Scotland would soon drain them of their treasure, were an open trade allowed; and on the other side of the Tweed a contrary apprehension prevailed: With what justice in both, time has shewn.

What happens in small portions of mankind must take place in greater. The provinces of the Roman empire, no doubt, kept their balance with each other, and with Italy, independent of the legislature; as much as the several counties of Great Britain, or the several parishes of each county. And any man who travels over Europe at this day, may see, by the prices of commodities, that money, in spite of the absurd jealousy of princes and states, has brought itself nearly to a level; and that the difference between one kingdom and another is not greater in this respect, than it is often between different provinces of the same kingdom. Men naturally flock to capital cities, sea ports, and navigable rivers. There we find more men, more industry, more commodities, and consequently more money; but still the latter difference holds proportion with the former, and the level is preserved†.

Our jealousy and our hatred of France are without bounds; and the former sentiment, at least, must be acknowledged reasonable and well-grounded. These passions have occasioned innumerable barriers and obstructions upon commerce, where we are accused of being commonly the aggressors. But what have we gained by the bargain? We lost the French market for our woollen manufactures, and transferred the commerce of wine to Spain and Portugal, where we buy worse liquor at a higher price. There are few Englishmen who would not think their country absolutely ruined, were French wines sold in England so cheap and in such abundance as to supplant, in some measure, all ale and home-brewed liquors: But would we lay aside prejudice, it would not

\* Les Interets d'Angleterre mal-entendus.

† See Note [L]

be difficult to prove, that nothing could be more innocent, perhaps advantageous. Each new acre of vineyard planted in France, in order to supply England with wine, would make it requisite for the French to take the produce of an English acre, sown in wheat or barley, in order to subsist themselves; and it is evident that we should thereby get command of the better commodity.

There are many edicts of the French king, prohibiting the planting of new vineyards, and ordering all those which are lately planted to be grubbed up: So sensible are they, in that country, of the superior value of corn above every other product.

Mareschal Vauban complains often, and with reason, of the absurd duties which load the entry of those wines of Languedoc, Guienne, and other southern provinces, that are imported into Brittany and Normandy. He entertained no doubt but these latter provinces could preserve their balance, notwithstanding the open commerce which he recommends. And it is evident, that a few leagues more navigation to England would make no difference; or if it did, that it must operate alike on the commodities of both kingdoms.

There is indeed one expedient by which it is possible to sink, and another by which we may raise money beyond its natural level in any kingdom; but these cases, when examined, will be found to resolve into our general theory, and to bring additional authority to it.

I scarcely know any method of sinking money below its level, but those institutions of banks, funds, and paper credit, which are so much practised in this kingdom. These render paper equivalent to money, circulate it throughout the whole state, make it supply the place of gold and silver, raise proportionably the price of labour and commodities, and by that means either banish a great part of those precious metals, or prevent their farther increase. What can be more short sighted than our reasonings on this head? We fancy, because an individual would be much richer were his stock of money doubled, that the same good effect would follow were the money of every one increased; not considering that this would raise as much the price of every commodity, and reduce every man in time to the same condition as before. It is only in our public negotiations and transactions with foreigners, that a greater stock of money is advantageous; and as our paper is there absolutely insignificant, we feel, by its means, all the effects arising from a great abundance of money, without reaping any of the advantages\*.

\* We observed in Essay XI. that money, when increasing, gives encouragement to industry, during the intervals between the increase of money and rise of the prices. A good effect of this nature may follow too from paper credit; but it is dangerous to precipitate matters at the risk of losing all by the falling of that credit, as must happen upon any violent shock in public affairs.

Suppose that there are 12 millions of paper, which circulate in the kingdom as money (for we are not to imagine that all our enormous funds are employed in that shape), and suppose the real cash of the kingdom to be 18 millions: Here is a state which is found by experience to be able to hold a stock of 30 millions. I say, if it be able to hold it, it must of necessity have acquired it in gold and silver, had we not obstructed the entrance of these metals by this new invention of paper. *Whence would it have acquired that sum?* From all the kingdoms of the world. *But why?* Because, if you remove these 12 millions, money in this state is below its level, compared with our neighbours; and we must immediately draw from all of them, till we be full and saturate, so to speak, and can hold no more. By our present politics, we are as careful to stuff the nation with this fine commodity of bank-bills and chequer notes, as if we were afraid of being overburdened with the precious metals.

It is not to be doubted, but the great plenty of bullion in France is, in a great measure, owing to the want of paper-credit. The French have no banks: Merchants' bills do not there circulate as with us: Usury, or lending on interest, is not directly permitted; so that many have large sums in their coffers: Great quantities of plate are used in private houses; and all the churches are full of it. By this means, provisions and labour still remain cheaper among them, than in nations that are not half so rich in gold and silver. The advantages of this situation, in point of trade, as well as in great public emergencies, are too evident to be disputed.

The same fashion a few years ago prevailed in Genoa, which still has place in England and Holland, of using services of China-ware instead of plate; but the senate, fore-seeing the consequence, prohibited the use of that brittle commodity beyond a certain extent; while the use of silver-plate was left unlimited. And I suppose, in their late distresses, they felt the good effect of this ordinance. Our tax on plate is, perhaps, in this view, somewhat impolitic.

Before the introduction of paper-money into our colonies, they had gold and silver sufficient for their circulation. Since the introduction of that commodity, the least inconvenience that has followed is the total banishment of the precious metals. And after the abolition of paper, can it be doubted but money will return, while these colonies possess manufactures and commodities, the only thing valuable in commerce, and for whose sake alone all men desire money?

What pity Lycurgus did not think of paper-credit, when he wanted to banish gold and silver from Sparta! It would have served his purpose better than the lumps of iron he made use of

as money; and would also have prevented more effectually all commerce with strangers, as being of so much less real and intrinsic value.

It must, however, be confessed, that, as all these questions of trade and money are extremely complicated, there are certain lights, in which this subject may be placed, so as to represent the advantages of paper-credit and banks to be superior to their disadvantages. That they banish specie and bullion from a state, is undoubtedly true; and whoever looks no further than this circumstance, does well to condemn them; but specie and bullion are not of so great consequence as not to admit of a compensation, and even an overbalance from the increase of industry and of credit, which may be promoted by the right use of paper-money. It is well known of what advantage it is to a merchant to be able to discount his bills upon occasion; and every thing that facilitates this species of traffic is favourable to the general commerce of a state. But private bankers are enabled to give such credit by the credit they receive from the depositing of money in their shops; and the bank of England in the same manner, from the liberty it has to issue its notes in all payments. There was an invention of this kind, which was fallen upon some years ago by the banks of Edinburgh; and which, as it is one of the most ingenious ideas that has been executed in commerce, has also been thought advantageous to Scotland. It is there called a Bank-Credit; and is of this nature. A man goes to the bank and finds surety to the amount, we shall suppose, of a thousand pounds. This money, or any part of it, he has the liberty of drawing out whenever he pleases, and he pays only the ordinary interest for it while it is in his hands. He may, when he pleases, repay any sum so small as twenty pounds, and the interest is discounted from the very day of the repayment. The advantages resulting from this contrivance are manifold. As a man may find surety nearly to the amount of his substance, and his bank-credit is equivalent to ready money, a merchant does hereby in a manner coin his houses, his household-furniture, the goods in his warehouse, the foreign debts due to him, his ships at sea; and can, upon occasion, employ them all in payments, as if they were the current money of the country. If a man borrow a thousand pounds from a private hand, besides that it is not always to be found when required, he pays interest for it, whether he be using it or not: His bank-credit costs him nothing, except during the very moment in which it is of service to him: And this circumstance is of equal advantage as if he had borrowed money at much lower interest. Merchants, likewise, from this invention acquire a great facility in supporting each other's credit, which is a considerable security against bankruptcies. A man, when his

own bank-credit is exhausted, goes to any of his neighbours who is not in the same condition; and he gets the money, which he replaces at his convenience.

After this practice had taken place during some years at Edinburgh, several companies of merchants at Glasgow carried the matter farther. They associated themselves into different banks, and issued notes so low as ten shillings, which they used in all payments for goods, manufactures, tradesmen's labour of all kinds; and these notes, from the established credit of the companies, passed as money in all payments throughout the country. By this means, a stock of five thousand pounds was able to perform the same operations as if it were six or seven; and merchants were thereby enabled to trade to a greater extent, and to require less profit in all their transactions. But whatever other advantages result from these inventions, it must still be allowed that besides giving too great facility to credit, which is dangerous, they banish the precious metals; and nothing can be a more evident proof of it, than a comparison of the past and present condition of Scotland in that particular. It was found, upon the recoinage made after the Union, that there was near a million of specie in that country: But notwithstanding the great increase of riches, commerce, and manufactures of all kinds, it is thought that, even where there is no extraordinary drain made by England, the current specie will not now amount to a third of that sum.

But as our projects of paper-credit are almost the only expedient by which we can sink money below its level; so, in my opinion, the only expedient by which we can raise money above it, is a practice which we should all exclaim against as destructive, namely the gathering of large sums into a public treasure, locking them up, and absolutely preventing their circulation. The fluid, not communicating with the neighbouring element, may, by such an artifice, be raised to what height we please. To prove this, we need only return to our first supposition, of annihilating the half or any part of our cash; where we found, that the immediate consequence of such an event would be the attraction of an equal sum from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Nor does there seem to be any necessary bounds set, by the nature of things, to this practice of hoarding. A small city, like Geneva continuing this policy for ages, might engross nine-tenths of the money in Europe. There seems, indeed, in the nature of man, an invincible obstacle to that immense growth of riches. A weak state, with an enormous treasure, will soon become a prey to some of its poorer, but more powerful neighbours. A great state would dissipate its wealth in dangerous and ill-concerted projects; and probably destroy, with it, what is much more valuable,

the industry, morals, and numbers of its people. The fluid, in this case, raised to too great a height, bursts and destroys the vessel that contains it; and mixing itself with the surrounding elements, soon falls to its proper level.

So little are we commonly acquainted with this principle, that, though all historians agree in relating uniformly so recent an event, as the immense treasure amassed by Harry VII. (which they make amount to 2,700,000 pounds) we rather reject their concurring testimony, than admit of a fact, which agrees so ill with our inveterate prejudices. It is indeed probable, that this sum might be three-fourths of all the money in England. But where is the difficulty in conceiving, that such a sum might be amassed in twenty years, by a cunning, rapacious, frugal, and almost absolute monarch? Nor is it probable, that the diminution of circulating money was ever sensibly felt by the people, or ever did them any prejudice. The sinking of the prices of all commodities would immediately replace it, by giving England the advantage in its commerce with the neighbouring kingdoms.

Have we not an instance in the small republic of Athens with its allies, who, in about fifty years, between the Median and Peloponnesian wars, amassed a sum not much inferior to that of Harry VII.? For all the Greek historians\* and orators† agree, that the Athenians collected in the citadel more than 10,000 talents, which they afterwards dissipated to their own ruin, in rash and imprudent enterprises. But when this money was set a-running, and began to communicate with the surrounding fluid, what was the consequence? Did it remain in the state? No. For we find, by the memorable *census* mentioned by Demosthenes‡ and Polybius§, that, in about fifty years afterwards, the whole value of the Republic, comprehending lands, houses, commodities, slaves, and money, was less than 6000 talents.

What an ambitious high-spirited people was this, to collect and keep in their treasury, with a view to conquests, a sum, which it was every day in the power of the citizens, by a single vote, to distribute among themselves, and which would have gone near to triple the riches of every individual! For we must observe, that the numbers and private riches of the Athenians are said, by ancient writers, to have been no greater at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, than at the beginning of the Macedonian.

Money was little more plentiful in Greece during the age of Philip and Perseus, than in England during that of Harry VII. Yet these two monarchs in thirty years|| collected from the small kingdom of Macedon, a larger treasure than that of the English!

\* Thucydides, lib. ii and Diod. Sic. lib. xii.

† *Vid. Aeschinis et Demosthenis Epist.*

‡ *Περὶ Συντακτικῆς*

§ Lib. ii. cap. 62.

|| Titl Livi, lib. xlv. cap. 40.

monarch. Paulus Æmilius brought to Rome about 1,700,000 pounds Sterling\*. Pliny says, 2,400,000.† And that was but a part of the Macedonian treasure. The rest was dissipated by the resistance and flight of Perseus.‡

We may learn from Stanian, that the canton of Berne had 300,000 pounds lent at interest, and had about six times as much in their treasury. Here then is a sum hoarded of 1,800,000 pounds Sterling, which is at least quadruple what should naturally circulate in such a petty state; and yet no one, who travels in the Pais de Vaux, or any part of that canton, observes any want of money more than could be supposed in a country of that extent, soil, and situation. On the contrary, there are scarce any inland provinces in the continent of France or Germany, where the inhabitants are at this time so opulent, though that canton has vastly increased its treasure since 1714, the time when Stanian wrote his judicious account of Switzerland.§

The account given by Appian|| of the treasure of the Ptolemies, is so prodigious, that one cannot admit of it; and so much the less, because the historian says, that the other successors of Alexander were also frugal, and had many of them treasures not much inferior. For this saving humour of the neighbouring princes must necessarily have checked the frugality of the Egyptian monarchs, according to the foregoing theory. The sum he mentions is 740,000 talents, or 191,166,666 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's computation. And yet Appian says, that he extracted his account from the public records; and he was himself a native of Alexandria.

From these principles we may learn what judgment we ought to form of those numberless bars, obstructions, and imposts, which all nations of Europe, and none more than England, have put upon trade; from an exorbitant desire of amassing money, which never will heap up beyond its level, while it circulates; or form an ill grounded apprehension of losing their specie, which never will sink below it. Could any thing scatter our riches, it would be such impolitic contrivances. But this general ill effect, however, results from them, that they deprive neighbouring nations of that free communication and exchange which the Author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other.

Our modern politics embrace the only method of banishing money, the using of paper-credit; they reject the only method of

\* *Yal. Patere.* lib. i. cap. 9.

† *Lib. xxxiii.* cap. 3.

‡ *Tit. Livii, ibid.*

§ The poverty which Stanian speaks of is only to be seen in the most mountainous cantons, where there is no commodity to bring money. And even there the people are not poorer than in the diocese of Saltzberg on the one hand, or Savoy on the other.

|| *Proem*



amassing it, the practice of hoarding; and they adopt a hundred contrivances, which serve to no purpose but to check industry, and to rob ourselves and our neighbours of the common benefits of art and nature.

All taxes, however, upon foreign commodities, are not to be regarded as prejudicial or useless, but those only which are founded on the jealousy above mentioned. A tax on German linen encourages home manufactures, and thereby multiplies our people and industry. A tax on brandy increases the sale of rum, and supports our southern colonies. And as it is necessary that imposts should be levied for the support of government, it may be thought more convenient to lay them on foreign commodities, which can easily be intercepted at the port, and subjected to the impost. We ought, however, always to remember the maxim of Dr. Swift, That, in the arithmetic of the customs, two and two make not four, but often make only one. It can scarcely be doubted, but if the duties on wine were lowered to a third, they would yield much more to the government than at present : Our people might thereby afford to drink commonly a better and more wholesome liquor ; and no prejudice would ensue to the balance of trade, of which we are so jealous. The manufacture of ale beyond the agriculture is but inconsiderable, and gives employment to few hands. The transport of wine and corn would not be much inferior.

But are there not frequent instances, you will say, of states and kingdoms, which were formerly rich and opulent, and are now poor and beggarly ? Has not the money left them, with which they formerly abounded ? I answer, If they lose their trade, industry, and people, they cannot expect to keep their gold and silver : For these precious metals will hold proportion to the former advantages. When Lisbon and Amsterdam got the East India trade from Venice and Genoa, they also got the profits and money which arose from it. Where the seat of government is transferred, where expensive armies are maintained at a distance, where great funds are possessed by foreigners ; there naturally follows from these causes a diminution of the specie. But these, we may observe, are violent and forcible methods of carrying away money, and are in time commonly attended with the transport of people and industry. But where these remain, and the drain is not continued, the money always finds its way back again, by a hundred canals, of which we have no notion or suspicion. What immense treasures have been spent, by so many nations in Flanders, since the Revolution, in the course of three long wars ? More money perhaps than the half of what is at present in Europe. But what has now become of it ? Is it in the narrow compass of the Austrian provinces ? No, surely : It has most of it returned

to the several countries whence it came, and has followed that art and industry by which at first it was acquired. For above a thousand years, the money of Europe has been flowing to Rome, by an open and sensible current; but it has been emptied by many secret and insensible canals: And the want of industry and commerce renders at present the Papal dominions the poorest territory in all Italy.

In short, a government has great reason to preserve with care its people and its manufactures. Its money, it may safely trust to the course of human affairs, without fear or jealousy. Or, if it ever give attention to this latter circumstance, it ought only to be so far as it affects the former.

## ESSAY XIV.

### OF THE JEALOUSY OF TRADE.

HAVING endeavoured to remove one species of ill-founded jealousy, which is so prevalent among commercial nations, it may not be amiss to mention another, which seems equally groundless. Nothing is more usual, among states which have made some advances in commerce, than to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish, but at their expense. In opposition to this narrow and malignant opinion, I will venture to assert, that the increase of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far, where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth and barbarism.

It is obvious, that the domestic industry of a people cannot be hurt by the greatest prosperity of their neighbours; and as this branch of commerce is undoubtedly the most important in any extensive kingdom, we are so far removed from all reason of jealousy. But I go farther, and observe, that where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is impossible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an increase from the improvement of the others. Compare the situation of Great Britain at present, with what it was two centuries ago. All the arts, both of agriculture and manufactures, were then extremely rude and imperfect. Every improvement, which we have since made, has arisen from our imitation of foreigners; and we ought so far to esteem it happy, that they had previously made advances in arts and ingenuity. But this intercourse is still upheld to

our advantage : Notwithstanding the advanced state of our manufactures, we daily adopt, in every art, the inventions and improvements of our neighbours. The commodity is first imported from abroad, to our great discontent, while we imagine that it drains us of our money : Afterwards, the art itself is gradually imported, to our visible advantage : Yet we continue still to repine, that our neighbours should possess any art, industry, and invention ; forgetting that, had they not first instructed us, we should have been at present barbarians ; and did they not still continue their instructions, the arts must fall into a state of languor, and lose that emulation and novelty which contribute so much to their advancement.

The increase of domestic industry lays the foundation of foreign commerce. Where a great number of commodities are raised and perfected for the home market, there will always be found some which can be exported with advantage. But if our neighbours have no art or cultivation, they cannot take them ; because they will have nothing to give in exchange. In this respect, states are in the same condition as individuals. A single man can scarcely be industrious, where all his fellow-citizens are idle. The riches of the several members of a community contribute to increase my riches, whatever profession I may follow. They consume the produce of my industry, and afford me the produce of theirs in return.

Nor needs any state entertain apprehensions, that their neighbours will improve to such a degree in every art and manufacture, as to have no demand from them. Nature, by giving a diversity of geniuses, climates, and soils to different nations, has secured their mutual intercourse and commerce, as long as they all remain industrious and civilized. Nay, the more the arts increase in any state, the more will be its demands from its industrious neighbours. The inhabitants, having become opulent and skilful, desire to have every commodity in the utmost perfection ; and as they have plenty of commodities to give in exchange, they make large importations from every foreign country. The industry of the nations, from whom they import, receives encouragement : Their own is also increased, by the sale of the commodities which they give in exchange.

But what if a nation has any staple commodity, such as the woollen manufacture is in England? Must not the interfering of our neighbours in that manufacture be a loss to us? I answer, that, when any commodity is denominated the staple of a kingdom, it is supposed that this kingdom has some peculiar and natural advantages for raising the commodity ; and if, notwithstanding these advantages, they lose such a manufacture, they ought to blame their own idleness or bad government, not the

industry of their neighbours. It ought also to be considered, that, by the increase of industry among the neighbouring nations, the consumption of every particular species of commodity is also increased; and though foreign manufactures interfere with them in the market, the demand for their product may still continue, or even increase. And should it diminish, ought the consequence to be esteemed so fatal? If the spirit of industry be preserved, it may easily be diverted from one branch to another; and the manufacturers of wool, for instance, be employed in linen, silk, iron, or any other commodities for which there appears to be a demand. We need not apprehend, that all the objects of industry will be exhausted, or that our manufacturers, while they remain on an equal footing with those of our neighbours, will be in danger of wanting employment. The emulation among rival nations serves rather to keep industry alive in all of them: And any people is happier who possess a variety of manufactures, than if they enjoyed one single great manufacture, in which they are all employed. Their situation is less precarious; and they will feel less sensibly those revolutions and uncertainties, to which every particular branch of commerce will always be exposed.

The only commercial state that ought to dread the improvements and industry of their neighbours, is such a one as the Dutch, who, enjoying no extent of land, nor possessing any number of native commodities, flourish only by their being the brokers, and factors, and carriers of others. Such a people may naturally apprehend, that as soon as the neighbouring states come to know and pursue their interest, they will take into their own hands the management of their affairs, and deprive their brokers of that profit which they formerly reaped from it. But though this consequence may naturally be dreaded, it is very long before it takes place; and by art and industry it may be warded off for many generations, if not wholly eluded. The advantage of superior stocks and correspondence is so great, that it is not easily overcome; and as all the transactions increase by the increase of industry in the neighbouring states, even a people whose commerce stands on this precarious basis, may at first reap a considerable profit from the flourishing condition of their neighbours. The Dutch, having mortgaged all their revenues, make not such a figure in political transactions as formerly; but their commerce is surely equal to what it was in the middle of the last century, when they were reckoned among the great powers of Europe.

Were our narrow and malignant politics to meet with success, we should reduce all our neighbouring nations to the same state of sloth and ignorance that prevails in Morocco and the coast of Barbary. But what would be the consequence? They could send

us no commodities : They could take none from us : Our domestic commerce itself would languish for want of emulation, example, and instruction : And we ourselves should soon fall into the same abject condition, to which we had reduced them. I shall therefore venture to acknowledge, that, not only as a man, but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself. I am at least certain that Great Britain, and all those nations, would flourish more, did their sovereigns and ministers adopt such enlarged and benevolent sentiments towards each other.

## ESSAY XV.

### OF TAXES.

*THERE is a prevailing maxim among some reasoners, that every new tax creates a new ability in the subject to bear it, and that each increase of public burdens increases proportionably the industry of the people.* This maxim is of such a nature as is most likely to be abused, and is so much the more dangerous, as its truth cannot be altogether denied ; but it must be owned, when kept within certain bounds, to have some foundation in reason and experience.

When a tax is laid upon commodities which are consumed by the common people, the necessary consequence may seem to be, either that the poor must retrench something from their way of living, or raise their wages, so as to make the burden of the tax fall entirely upon the rich. But there is a third consequence which often follows upon taxes, namely that the poor increase their industry, perform more work, and live as well as before, without demanding more for their labour. Where taxes are moderate, are laid on gradually, and affect not the necessities of life, this consequence naturally follows ; and it is certain, that such difficulties often serve to excite the industry of a people, and render them more opulent and laborious, than others, who enjoy the greatest advantages ? for we may observe, as a parallel instance, that the most commercial nations have not always possessed the greatest extent of fertile land, but, on the contrary, that they have laboured under many natural disadvantages. Tyre, Athens, Carthage, Rhodes, Genoa, Venice, Holland, are strong examples to this purpose ; and in all history, we find only three instances of large and fertile countries which have possessed much trade ; the Netherlands, England, and France. The two former seem to have been allured by the advantages of their maritime situation, and the necessity they lay under of frequenting foreign

ports, in order to procure what their own climate refused them; and as to France, trade has come late into that kingdom, and seems to have been the effect of reflection and observation in an ingenious and enterprising people, who remarked the riches acquired by such of the neighbouring nations as cultivated navigation and commerce.

The places mentioned by Cicero,\* as possessed of the greatest commerce in his time, are Alexandria, Colchos, Tyre, Sidon, Andros, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Lycia, Rhodes, Chios, Byzantium, Lesbos, Smyrna, Miletum, Coos. All these, except Alexandria, were either small islands, or narrow territories; and that city owed its trade entirely to the happiness of its situation.

Since, therefore, some natural necessities or disadvantages may be thought favourable to industry, why may not artificial burdens have the same effect? Sir William Temple,† we may observe, ascribes the industry of the Dutch entirely to necessity, proceeding from their natural disadvantages; and illustrates his doctrine by a striking comparison with Ireland, "where," says he, "by the largeness and plenty of the soil, and scarcity of people, all things necessary to life are so cheap, that an industrious man, by two days' labour, may gain enough to feed him the rest of the week; which I take to be a very plain ground of the laziness attributed to the people, for men naturally prefer ease before labour, and will not take pains if they can live idle; though when, by necessity, they have been inured to it, they cannot leave it, being grown a custom necessary to their health, and to their very entertainment, Nor perhaps is the change harder, from constant ease to labour, than from constant labour to ease." After which the author proceeds to confirm his doctrine, by enumerating, as above, the places where trade has most flourished in ancient and modern times; and which are commonly observed to be such narrow confined territories, as beget a necessity for industry.

The best taxes are such as are levied upon consumptions, especially those of luxury, because such taxes are least felt by the people. They seem, in some measure, voluntary; since a man may choose how far he will use the commodity which is taxed. They are paid gradually and insensibly; they naturally produce sobriety and frugality, if judiciously imposed; and being confounded with the natural price of the commodity, they are scarcely perceived by the consumers. Their only disadvantage is, that they are expensive in the levying.

Taxes upon possessions are levied without expense, but have every other disadvantage. Most states, however, are obliged to have recourse to them, in order to supply the deficiencies of the other.

\* Epist. ad Att. lib. ix. ep. 11.    † Account of the Netherlands, chap. 6.

But the most pernicious of all taxes are the arbitrary. They are commonly converted, by their management, into punishments on industry; and also, by their unavoidable inequality, are more grievous, than by the real burden which they impose. It is surprising, therefore, to see them have place among any civilized people.

In general, all poll-taxes, even when not arbitrary, which they commonly are, may be esteemed dangerous: Because it is so easy for the sovereign to add a little more, and a little more, to the sum demanded, that these taxes are apt to become altogether oppressive and intolerable. On the other hand, a duty upon commodities checks itself; and a prince will soon find that an increase of the impost is no increase of his revenue. It is not easy, therefore, for a people to be altogether ruined by such taxes.

Historians inform us, that one of the chief causes of the destruction of the Roman state, was the alteration which Constantine introduced into the finances, by substituting an universal poll-tax in lieu of almost all the tithes, customs, and excises, which formerly composed the revenue of the *empire*. The people, in all the provinces, were so grinded and oppressed by the *publicans*, that they were glad to take refuge under the conquering arms of the barbarians; whose dominion, as they had fewer necessities and less art, was found preferable to the refined tyranny of the Romans.

It is an opinion, zealously promoted by some political writers, that, since all taxes, as they pretend, fall ultimately upon land, it were better to lay them originally there, and abolish every duty upon consumptions. But it is denied that all taxes fall ultimately upon land. If a duty be laid upon any commodity, consumed by an artisan, he has two obvious expedients for paying it; he may retrench somewhat of his expense, or he may increase his labour. Both these resources are more easy and natural than that of heightening his wages. We see, that, in years of scarcity, the weaver either consumes less or labours more, or employs both these expedients of frugality and industry, by which he is enabled to reach the end of the year. It is but just that he should subject himself to the same hardships, if they deserve the name, for the sake of the public which gives him protection. By what contrivance can he raise the price of his labour? The manufacturer who employs him will not give him more: Neither can he, because the merchant, who exports the cloth, cannot raise its price, being limited by the price which it yields in foreign markets. Every man, to be sure, is desirous of pushing off from himself the burden of any tax which is imposed, and of laying it upon others: But as every man has the same inclination, and is upon the defensive; no set of men can be supposed to prevail alto-

in this contest. And why the landed gentleman should be the victim of the whole, and should not be able to defend himself, as well as others are, I cannot readily imagine. All tradesmen, indeed, would willingly prey upon him, and divide him among them, if they could: But this inclination they always have, though no taxes were levied; and the same methods by which he guards against the imposition of tradesmen before taxes, will serve him afterwards, and make them share the burden with him. They must be very heavy taxes, indeed, and very injudiciously levied, which the artisan will not, of himself, be enabled to pay by superior industry and frugality, without raising the price of his labour.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that we have, with regard to taxes, an instance of what frequently happens in political institutions, that the consequences of things are diametrically opposite to what we should expect on the first appearance. It is regarded as a fundamental maxim of the Turkish government, that the *Grand Signior*, though absolute master of the lives and fortunes of each individual, has no authority to impose a new tax; and every Ottoman prince, who has made such an attempt, either has been obliged to retract, or has found the fatal effects of his perseverance. One would imagine, that this prejudice or established opinion were the firmest barrier in the world against oppression; yet it is certain that its effect is quite contrary. The Emperor, having no regular method of increasing his revenue, must allow all the bashaws and governors to oppress and abuse the subjects; and these he squeezes, after their return from their government. Whereas, if he could impose a new tax, like our European princes, his interest would so far be united with that of his people, that he would immediately feel the bad effects of these disorderly levies of money; and would find, that a pound, raised by a general imposition, would have less pernicious effects than a shilling taken in so unequal and arbitrary a manner.

## ESSAY XVI.

### OF PUBLIC CREDIT.

It appears to have been the common practice of antiquity, to make provision, during peace, for the necessities of war, and to hoard up treasures beforehand as the instruments either of conquest or defence; without trusting to extraordinary impositions, much less to borrowing, in times of disorder and confusion. Besides the immense sums above mentioned\*, which were amassed by Athens, and by the Ptolemies, and other successors of Alex-

\* Essay XIV.



ander; we learn from Plato\*, that the frugal Lacedemonians had also collected a great treasure; and Arrian† and Plutarch‡ take notice of the riches which Alexander got possession of on the conquest of Susa and Ecbatana, and which were reserved, some of them, from the time of Cyrus. If I remember right, the Scripture also mentions the treasure of Hezekiah and the Jewish princes; as profane history does that of Philip and Perseus, kings of Macedon. The ancient republics of Gaul had commonly large sums in reserve||. Every one knows the treasure seized in Rome by Julius Cæsar, during the civil wars: and we find afterwards, that the wiser emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Severus, &c. always discovered the prudent foresight of saving great sums against any public exigency.

On the contrary, our modern expedient, which has become very general, is to mortgage the public revenues, and to trust that posterity will pay off the incumbrances contracted by their ancestors: And they, having before their eyes so good an example of their wise fathers, have the same prudent reliance on *their* posterity; who, at last, from necessity more than choice, are obliged to place the same confidence in a new posterity. But not to waste time in declaiming against a practice which appears ruinous beyond all controversy; it seems pretty apparent, that the ancient maxims are, in this respect, more prudent than the modern; even though the latter had been confined within some reasonable bounds, and had ever, in any instance, been attended with such frugality, in time of peace, as to discharge the debts incurred by an expensive war. For why should the case be so different between the public and an individual, as to make us establish different maxims of conduct for each? If the funds of the former be greater, its necessary expenses are proportionably larger; if its resources be more numerous, they are not infinite; and as its frame should be calculated for a much longer duration than the date of a single life, or even of a family, it should embrace maxims, large, durable, and generous, agreeably to the supposed extent of its existence. To trust to chances and temporary expedients, is, indeed, what the necessity of human affairs frequently renders unavoidable; but whoever voluntarily depend on such resources, have not necessity, but their own folly to accuse for their misfortunes, when any such befall them.

If the abuses of treasures be dangerous, either by engaging the state in rash enterprises, or making it neglect military discipline,

\* Alcib. 1.

† Lib. iii.

‡ Plut. in vita Alex. He makes these treasures amount to 80,000 talents, or about 16 millions Sterling. Quintus Curtius (lib. v. cap. 2.) says, that Alexander found in Susa above 50,000 talents.

|| Strabo, lib. iv.

in confidence of its riches; the abuses of mortgaging are more certain and inevitable; poverty, impotence, and subjection to foreign powers.

According to modern policy, war is attended with every destructive circumstance; loss of men, increase of taxes, decay of commerce, dissipation of money, devastation by sea and land. According to ancient maxims, the opening of the public treasure, as it produced an uncommon affluence of gold and silver, served as a temporary encouragement to industry, and atoned, in some degree, for the inevitable calamities of war.

It is very tempting to a minister to employ such an expedient, as enables him to make a great figure during his administration, without overburdening the people with taxes, or exciting any immediate clamours against himself. The practice, therefore, of contracting debt, will almost infallibly be abused in every government. It would scarcely be more imprudent to give a prodigal son a credit in every banker's shop in London, than to empower a statesman to draw bills, in this manner, upon posterity.

What, then, shall we say to the new paradox, that public incumbrances are, of themselves, advantageous, independent of the necessity of contracting them; and that any state, even though it were not pressed by a foreign enemy, could not possibly have embraced a wiser expedient for promoting commerce and riches, than to create funds, and debts, and taxes, without limitation? Reasonings, such as these, might naturally have passed for trials of wit among rhetoricians, like the panegyrics on folly and a fever, on Busiris and Nero, had we not seen such absurd maxims patronized by great ministers, and by a whole party among us.

Let us examine the consequences of public debts, both in our domestic management, by their influence on commerce and industry; and in our foreign transactions, by their effect on wars and negotiations.

Public securities are with us become a kind of money, and as readily at the current price as gold or silver. Wherever a profitable undertaking offers itself, how expensive soever, there are never wanting hands enough to embrace it; nor need a trader, who has sums in the public stocks, fear to launch out into the most extensive trade; since he is possessed of funds which will answer the most sudden demand that can be made upon him. A merchant thinks it necessary to keep by him any considerable sum. Bank-stock, or India bonds, especially the latter, serve all the same purposes; because he can dispose of them, or pledge them to a banker, in a quarter of an hour; and at the same time they are not idle, even when in his scrutoire, but bring him in a constant revenue. In short our national debts furnish merchants

with a species of money that is continually multiplying in their hands, and produces sure gain, besides the profits of their commerce. This must enable them to trade upon less profit. The small profit of the merchant renders the commodity cheaper, causes a greater consumption, quickens the labour of the common people, and helps to spread arts and industry throughout the whole society.

There are also, we may observe, in England and in all states which have both commerce and public debts, a set of men, who are half merchants, half stockholders, and may be supposed willing to trade for small profits; because commerce is not their principal or sole support, and their revenues in the funds are a sure resource for themselves and their families. Were there no funds, great merchants would have no expedient for realizing or securing any part of their profit, but by making purchases of land; and land has many disadvantages in comparison of funds. Requiring more care and inspection, it divides the time and attention of the merchant upon any tempting offer or extraordinary accident in trade; it is not so easily converted into money; and as it attracts too much, both by the many natural pleasures it affords, and the authority it gives, it soon converts the citizen into the country gentleman. More men, therefore, with large stocks and incomes, may naturally be supposed to continue in trade, where there are public debts; and this, it must be owned, is of some advantage to commerce, by diminishing its profits, promoting circulation, and encouraging industry.

But, in opposition to these two favourable circumstances, perhaps of no very great importance, weigh the many disadvantages which attend our public debts, in the whole *interior* economy of the state: You will find no comparison between the ill and the good which result from them.

*First*, It is certain that national debts cause a mighty confluence of people and riches to the capital, by the great sums levied in the provinces to pay the interest; and perhaps, too, by the advantages in trade above mentioned, which they give the merchants in the capital above the rest of the kingdom. The question is, Whether, in our case, it be for the public interest, that so many privileges should be conferred on London, which has already arrived at such an enormous size, and seems still increasing? Some men are apprehensive of the consequences. For my own part, I cannot forbear thinking, that, though the head is undoubtedly too large for the body, yet that great city is so happily situated, that its excessive bulk causes less inconvenience than even a smaller capital to a greater kingdom. There is more difference between the prices of all provisions in Paris and Languedoc, than between those in London and Yorkshire. The

immense greatness, indeed, of London, under a government which admits not of discretionary power, renders the people factious, mutinous, seditious, and even perhaps rebellious. But to this evil the national debts themselves tend to provide a remedy. The first visible eruption, or even immediate danger of public disorders, must alarm all the stockholders, whose property is the most precarious of any; and will make them fly to the support of government, whether menaced by Jacobitish violence, or democratical frenzy.

*Secondly*, Public stocks, being a kind of paper-credit, have all the disadvantages attending that species of money. They banish gold and silver from the most considerable commerce of the state, reduce them to common circulation, and by that means render all provisions and labour dearer than otherwise they would be.

*Thirdly*, The taxes, which are levied to pay the interests of these debts, are apt either to heighten the price of labour, or to be an oppression on the poorer sort.

*Fourthly*, As foreigners possess a great share of our national funds, they render the public, in a manner, tributary to them, and may, in time, occasion the transport of our people and our industry.

*Fifthly*, The greater part of the public stock being always in the hands of idle people, who live on their revenue, our funds, in that view, give great encouragement to an useless and inactive life.

But though the injury, that arises to commerce and industry from our public funds will appear, upon balancing the whole, not inconsiderable, it is trivial, in comparison of the prejudice that results to the state considered as a body politic, which must support itself in the society of nations, and have various transactions with other states in wars and negotiations. The ill there, is pure and unmixed, without any favourable circumstance to atone for it; and it is an ill too of a nature the highest and most important.

We have indeed been told, that the public is no weaker upon account of its debts, since they are mostly due among ourselves, and bring as much property to one as they take from another. It is like transferring money from the right hand to the left; which leaves the person neither richer nor poorer than before. Such loose reasonings and specious comparisons will always pass where we judge not upon principles. I ask, Is it possible, in the nature of things, to overburden a nation with taxes, even where the sovereign resides among them? The very doubt seems extravagant; since it is requisite, in every community, that there be a certain proportion observed between the laborious and the

idle part of it. But if all our present taxes be mortgaged, must we not invent new ones? And may not this matter be carried to a length that is ruinous and destructive?

In every nation, there are always some methods of levying money more easy than others, agreeably to the way of living of the people, and the commodities they make use of. In Great Britain, the excises upon malt and beer afford a large revenue; because the operations of malting and brewing are tedious, and are impossible to be concealed; and, at the same time, these commodities are not so absolutely necessary to life, as that the raising of their price would very much affect the poorer sort. These taxes being all mortgaged, what difficulty to find new ones! what vexation and ruin of the poor!

Duties upon consumptions are more equal and easy than those upon possessions. What a loss to the public that the former are all exhausted and that we must have recourse to the more grievous method of levying taxes!

Were all the proprietors of land only stewards to the public, must not necessity force them to practise all the arts of oppression used by stewards; where the absence or negligence of the proprietor render them secure against inquiry?

It will scarcely be asserted, that no bounds ought ever to be set to national debts, and that the public would be no weaker, were twelve or fifteen shillings in the pound, land-tax, mortgaged, with all the present customs and excises. There is something, therefore, in the case, beside the mere transferring of property from the one hand to another. In five hundred years, the posterity of those now in the coaches, and of those upon the boxes, will probably have changed places, without affecting the public by these revolutions.

Suppose the public once fairly brought to that condition, to which it is hastening with such amazing rapidity; suppose the land to be taxed eighteen or nineteen shillings in the pound; for it can never bear the whole twenty; suppose all the excises and customs to be screwed up to the utmost which the nation can bear, without entirely losing its commerce and industry; and suppose that all those funds are mortgaged to perpetuity, and that the invention and wit of all our projectors can find no new imposition, which may serve as the foundation of a new loan; and let us consider the necessary consequences of this situation. Though the imperfect state of our political knowledge, and the narrow capacities of men, make it difficult to foretell the effects which will result from any untried measure, the seeds of ruin are here scattered with such profusion as not to escape the eye of the most careless observer.

In this unnatural state of society, the only persons who pos-

sess any revenue beyond the immediate effects of their industry, are the stockholders, who draw almost all the rent of the land and houses, besides the produce of all the customs and excises. These are men who have no connexions with the state, who can enjoy their revenue in any part of the globe in which they choose to reside, who will naturally bury themselves in the capital, or in great cities, and who will sink into the lethargy of a stupid and pampered luxury, without spirit, ambition, or enjoyment. Adieu to all ideas of nobility, gentry, and family. The stocks can be transferred in an instant; and being in such a fluctuating state, will seldom be transmitted during three generations from father to son. Or were they to remain ever so long in one family, they convey no hereditary authority or credit to the possessor; and by this means the several ranks of men, which form a kind of independent magistracy in a state, instituted by the hand of nature, are entirely lost; and every man in authority derives his influence from the commission alone of the sovereign. No expedient remains for preventing or suppressing insurrections but mercenary armies: No expedient at all remains for resisting tyranny: Elections are swayed by bribery and corruption alone: And the middle power between king and people being totally removed, a grievous despotism must infallibly prevail. The landholders, despised for their poverty, and hated for their oppressions, will be utterly unable to make any opposition to it.

Though a resolution should be formed by the legislature never to impose any tax which hurts commerce and discourages industry, it will be impossible for men, in subjects of such extreme delicacy, to reason so justly as never to be mistaken, or amidst difficulties so urgent, never to be seduced from their resolution. The continual fluctuations in commerce require continual alterations in the nature of the taxes; which exposes the legislature every moment to the danger both of wilful and involuntary error. And any great blow given to trade, whether by injudicious taxes or by other accidents, throws the whole system of government into confusion.

But what expedient can the public now employ, even supposing trade to continue in the most flourishing condition, in order to support its foreign wars and enterprises, and to defend its own honour and interest, or those of its allies? I do not ask how the public is to exert such a prodigious power as it has maintained during our late wars; where we have so much exceeded, not only our own natural strength, but even that of the greatest empires. This extravagance is the abuse complained of, as the source of all the dangers to which we are at present exposed. But since we must still suppose great commerce and opulence to remain, even after every fund is mortgaged; these riches must

be defended by proportional power; and whence is the public to derive the revenue which supports it? It must plainly be from a continual taxation of the annuities, or, which is the same thing, from mortgaging anew, on every exigency, a certain part of their annuities; and thus making them contribute to their own defence, and to that of the nation. But the difficulties attending this system of policy will easily appear, whether we suppose the king to have become absolute master, or to be still controlled by national councils, in which the annuitants themselves must necessarily bear the principle sway.

If the prince has become absolute, as may naturally be expected from this situation of affairs, it is so easy for him to increase his exactions upon the annuitants, which amount only to the retaining of money in his own hands, that this species of property would soon lose all its credit, and the whole income of every individual in the state must lie entirely at the mercy of the sovereign; a degree of despotism which no oriental monarch has ever yet attained. If, on the contrary, the consent of the annuitants be requisite for every taxation, they will never be persuaded to contribute sufficiently even to the support of government; as the diminution of their revenue must in that case be very sensible, would not be disguised under the appearance of a branch of excise or customs, and would not be shared by any other order of the state, who are already supposed to be taxed to the utmost. There are instances, in some republics, of a hundredth penny, and sometimes of the fiftieth, being given to the support of the state; but this is always an extraordinary exertion of power, and can never become the foundation of a constant national defence. We have always found, where a government has mortgaged all its revenues, that it necessarily sinks into a state of languor, inactivity, and impotence.

Such are the inconveniences which may reasonably be foreseen of this situation to which Great Britain is visibly tending. Not to mention the numberless inconveniences, which cannot be foreseen, and which must result from so monstrous a situation as that of making the public the chief or sole proprietor of, besides investing it with every branch of customs and excise, which the fertile imagination of ministers and projectors have been able to invent.

I must confess that there has a strange supineness, from long custom, crept into all ranks of men, with regard to public debts, not unlike what divines so vehemently complain of with regard to their religious doctrines. We all own that the most sanguine imagination cannot hope, either that this or any future ministry will be possessed of such rigid and steady frugality, as to make a considerable progress in the payment of our debts; or

that the situation of foreign affairs will, for any long time, allow them leisure and tranquillity for such an undertaking. *What then is to become of us?* Were we ever so good Christians, and ever so resigned to providence; this, methinks, were a curious question, even considered as a speculative one, and what it might not be altogether impossible to form some conjectural solution of. The events here will depend little upon the contingencies of battles, negociations, intrigues and factions. There seems to be a natural progress of things which may guide our reasoning. As it would have required but a moderate share of prudence, when we first began this practice of mortgaging, to have foretold, from the nature of men and of ministers, that things would necessarily be carried to the length we see; so now, that they have at last happily reached it, it may not be difficult to guess at the consequences. It must, indeed, be one of these two events; either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation. It is impossible that they can both subsist, after the manner they have been hitherto managed, in this, as well as in some other countries.

There was, indeed, a scheme for the payment of our debts, which was proposed by an excellent citizen, Mr. Hutchinson, above thirty years ago, and which was so much approved of by some men of sense, but never was likely to take effect. He asserted that there was a fallacy in imagining that the public owed this debt; for that really every individual owed a proportional share of it, and paid, in his taxes, a proportional share of the interest, beside the expense of levying these taxes. Had we not better, then, says he, make a distribution of the debt among ourselves, and each of us contribute a sum suitable to his property, and by that means discharge at once all our funds and public mortgages. He seems not to have considered that the laborious poor pay a considerable part of the taxes by their annual consumptions, though they could not advance, at once, a proportional part of the sum required. Not to mention, that property in money and stock in trade might easily be concealed and disguised; and that visible property in lands and houses would be really at last answer for the whole: An inequality and confusion, which never would be submitted to. But though the project is not likely to take place, it is not altogether impossible, that, when the nation becomes heartily sick of its debts, and is cruelly oppressed by them, some daring projector may arise with visionary schemes for their discharge. And as public credit will begin, by that time, to be a little frail, the least touch will destroy it, as happened in France during the regency; and in this manner it will *die of the doctor*. But it is more probable, that the breach of national faith will



be the necessary effect of wars, defeats, misfortunes, and public calamities, or even perhaps of victories and conquests. I must confess, when I see princes and states fighting and quarrelling, amidst their debts, funds, and public mortgages, it always brings to my mind a match of cudgel-playing fought in a China shop. How can it be expected, that sovereigns will spare a species of property, which is pernicious to themselves and to the public, when they have so little compassion on lives and properties that are useful to both? Let the time come (and surely it will come) when the new funds, created for the exigencies of the year, are not subscribed to, and raise not the money projected. Suppose either that the cash of the nation is exhausted; or that our faith, which has hitherto been so ample, begins to fail us. Suppose that, in this distress, the nation is threatened with an invasion; a rebellion is suspected or broken out at home; a squadron cannot be equipped for want of pay, victuals, or repairs; or even a foreign subsidy cannot be advanced. What must a prince or minister do in such an emergence? The right of self-preservation is unalienable in every individual, much more in every community. And the folly of our statesmen must then be greater than the folly of those who first contracted debt, or, what is more, than that of those who trusted, or continue to trust this security, if these statesmen have the means of safety in their hands, and do not employ them. The funds, created and mortgaged, will by that time bring in a large yearly revenue, sufficient for the defence and security of the nation: Money is perhaps lying in the exchequer, ready for the discharge of the quarterly interest: necessity calls, fear urges, reason exhorts, compassion alone exclaims: The money will immediately be seized for the current service, under the most solemn protestations, perhaps, of being immediately replaced. But no more is requisite. The whole fabric, already tottering, falls to the ground, and buries thousands in its ruins. And this, I think, may be called the *natural death* of public credit; for to this period it tends as naturally as an animal body to its dissolution and destruction.

So great dupes are the generality of mankind, that, notwithstanding such a violent shock to public credit, as a voluntary bankruptcy in England would occasion, it would not probably be long ere credit would again revive in as flourishing a condition as before. The present king of France, during the late war, borrowed money at a lower interest than ever his grandfather did; and as low as the British parliament, comparing the natural rate of interest in both kingdoms. And though men are commonly more governed by what they have seen, than by what they foresee, with whatever certainty; yet promises, protestations, fair appearances, with the allurements of present interest,

have such powerful influence as few are able to resist. Mankind are, in all ages, caught by the same baits : The same tricks, played over and over again, still tropan them. The heights of popularity and patriotism are still the beaten road to power and tyranny ; flattery, to treachery ; standing armies, to arbitrary government ; and the glory of God, to the temporal interest of the clergy. The fear of an everlasting destruction of credit, allowing it to be an evil, is a needless bugbear. A prudent man, in reality, would rather lend to the public immediately after we had taken a sponge to our debts, than at present ; as much as an opulent knave, even though one could not force him to pay, is a preferable debtor to an honest bankrupt : For the former, in order to carry on business, may find it his interest to discharge his debts, where they are not exorbitant : The latter has it not in his power. The reasoning of Tacitus\*, as it is eternally true, is very applicable to our present case. *Sed vulgus ad magnitudinem benefici orum aderat : Stultissimus quisque pecuniis mercabatur : Apud sapientes cussa habebantur, quæ neque dari neque accipi, salva republica, poterant.* The public is a debtor, whom no man can oblige to pay. The only check which the creditors have upon her, is the interest of preserving credit ; an interest which may easily be overbalanced by a great debt, and by a difficult and extraordinary emergence, even supposing that credit irrecoverable. Not to mention, that a present necessity often forces states into measures, which are, strictly speaking, against their interest.

These two events supposed above, are calamitous, but not the most calamitous. Thousands are thereby sacrificed to the safety of millions. But we are not without danger, that the contrary event may take place, and that millions may be sacrificed for ever to the temporary safety of thousands.† Our popular government, perhaps, will render it difficult or dangerous for a minister to venture on so desperate an expedient as that of a voluntary bankruptcy. And though the House of Lords be altogether composed of proprietors of land, and the House of Commons chiefly ; frequently neither of them can be supposed to have great influence in the funds : Yet the connexions of the members may be great with the proprietors, as to render them more tenacious of public faith than prudence, policy, or even justice, strictly speaking, requires. And perhaps, too, our foreign enemies may be so politic as to discover, that our safety lies in despair, and therefore, show the danger, open and barefaced, till it be too late. The balance of power in Europe, our grandfathers, and we, have all deemed too unequal to be preserved without our attention and assistance. But our children, weary of

\* Hist. lib. ii

† See NOTE [M]

the struggle, and fettered with encumbrances, may sit down secure, and see their neighbours oppressed and conquered; till, at last, they themselves and their creditors lie both at the mercy of the conqueror. And this may properly enough be denominated the *violent death* of our public credit.

These seem to be the events, which are not very remote, and which reason foresees as clearly almost as she can do any thing that lies in the womb of time. And though the ancients maintained that, in order to reach the gift of prophecy, a certain divine fury or madness was requisite, one may safely affirm that, in order to deliver such prophecies as these, no more is necessary than merely to be in one's senses, free from the influence of popular madness and delusion.

## ESSAY XVII.

### OF THE BALANCE OF POWER.

It is a question, whether the *idea* of the balance of power be owing entirely to modern policy, or whether the *phrase* only has been invented in the later ages? It is certain that Xenophon,\* in his Institution of Cyrus, represents the combination of the Asiatic powers to have arisen from a jealousy of the increasing force of the Medes and Persians; and though that elegant composition should be supposed altogether a romance, this sentiment, ascribed by the author to the Eastern princes, is at least a proof of the prevailing notion of ancient times.

In all the politics of Greece, the anxiety, with regard to the balance of power, is apparent, and is expressly pointed out to us, even by the ancient historians. Thucydides† represents the league which was formed against Athens, and which produced the Peloponnesian war, as entirely owing to this principle. And after the decline of Athens, when the Thebans and Lacedemonians disputed for sovereignty, we find that the Athenians (as well as many other republics) always threw themselves into the lighter scale, and endeavoured to preserve the balance. They supported Thebes against Sparta, till the great victory gained by Epaminondas at Leuctra; after which they immediately went over to the conqueror, from generosity as they pretended, but in reality from their jealousy of the conquerors.‡

Whoever will read Demosthenes's oration for the Megalopolitans, may see the utmost refinements on this principle that entered into the head of a Venetian or English speculatist. And upon the first rise of the Macedonian power, this orator imme-

\* Lib. i.

† Lib. i.

‡ Xenoph. Hist. Græc. lib. vi and vii.

diately discovered the danger, sounded the alarm throughout all Greece, and at last assembled that confederacy under the banners of Athens which fought the great and decisive battle of Chæronea.

It is true, the Grecian wars are regarded by historians as wars of emulation rather than of politics; and each state seems to have had more in view the honour of leading the rest, than any well-grounded hopes of authority and dominion. If we consider, indeed, the small number of inhabitants in any one republic, compared to the whole, the great difficulty of forming sieges in those times, and the extraordinary bravery and discipline of every freeman among that noble people; we shall conclude, that the balance of power was, of itself, sufficiently secured in Greece, and need not to have been guarded with that caution which may be requisite in other ages. But whether we ascribe the shifting of sides in all the Grecian republics to *jealous emulation* or *cautious politics*, the effects were alike, and every prevailing power was sure to meet with a confederacy against it, and that often composed of its former friends and allies.

The same principle, call it envy or prudence, which produced the *Ostracism* of Athens, and *Petalism* of Syracuse, and expelled every citizen whose fame or power overtopped the rest; the same principle, I say, naturally discovered itself to foreign politics, and soon raised enemies to the leading state, however moderate in the exercise of its authority.

The Persian monarch was really, in his force, a petty prince compared to the Grecian republics; and therefore, it behoved him, from views of safety more than from emulation, to interest himself in their quarrels, and to support the weaker side in every contest. This was the advice given by Alcibiades to Tissaphernes\*, and it prolonged, near a century, the date of the Persian empire; till the neglect of it for a moment, after the first appearance of the aspiring genius of Philip, brought that lofty and frail edifice to the ground, with a rapidity of which there are few instances in the history of mankind.

The successors of Alexander showed great jealousy of the balance of power; a jealousy founded on true politics and prudence, and which preserved distinct for several ages the partition made after the death of that famous conqueror. The fortune and ambition of Antigonust threatened them anew with a universal monarchy; but their combination, and their victory at Ipsus, saved them. And in subsequent times, we find, that, as the princes considered the Greeks and Macedonians as the only real military force with whom they had any intercourse, they

\* Thucyd. lib. viii.

† Diod. Sic. lib. xx.

kept always a watchful eye over that part of the world. The Ptolemies, in particular, supported first Aratus and the Achæans, and then Cleomenes king of Sparta, from no other view than as a counterbalance to the Macedonian monarchs. For this is the account which Polybius gives of the Egyptian politics\*.

The reason why it is supposed that the ancients were entirely ignorant of the *balance of power*, seems to be drawn from the Roman history more than the Grecian; and as the transactions of the former are generally more familiar to us, we have thence formed all our conclusions. It must be owned, that the Romans never met with any such general combination or confederacy against them, as might naturally have been expected, for their rapid conquests and declared ambition, but were allowed peaceably to subdue their neighbours, one after another, till they extended their dominion over the whole known world. Not to mention the fabulous history of the Italic wars, there was, upon Hannibal's invasion of the Roman state, a remarkable crisis, which ought to have called up the attention of all civilized nations. It appeared afterwards (nor was it difficult to be observed at the time)† that this was a contest for universal empire; yet no prince or state seems to have been in the least alarmed about the event or issue of the quarrel. Philip of Macedon remained neuter, till he saw the victories of Hannibal; and then most imprudently formed an alliance with the conqueror, upon terms still more imprudent. He stipulated, that he was to assist the Carthaginian state in their conquest of Italy; after which they engaged to send over forces into Greece, to assist him in subduing the Grecian commonwealth‡.

The Rhodian and Achæan republics are much celebrated by ancient historians for their wisdom and sound policy; yet both of them assisted the Romans in their wars against Philip and Antiochus. And what may be esteemed still a stronger proof that this maxim was not generally known in those ages, no ancient author has remarked the imprudence of these measures, nor has even blamed that absurd treaty above mentioned, made by Philip with the Carthaginians. Princes and states in those ages, may, beforehand, be blinded in their reasonings to events: But it is somewhat extraordinary, that afterwards, should not form a sounder judgment of the Massinissa, Attalus, Prusias, in gratifying their private views, were all of them the instruments of the Roman greatness. They never seem to have suspected, that they were forging

\* Lib. ii. cap. 51.

† It was observed by some, as appears by the speech of Agosilaus of the general congress of Greece. See Polyb. lib. v. cap. 104.

‡ Tit. Livii, lib. xxiii. cap. 83.

chains, while they advanced the conquests of their ally. A simple treaty and agreement between Massinissa and the Carthaginians, so much required by mutual interest, barred the Romans from all entrance into Africa, and preserved liberty to mankind.

The only prince we meet with in the Roman history, who seems to have understood the balance of power, is Hiero, king of Syracuse. Though the ally of Rome, he sent assistance to the Carthaginians during the war of the auxiliaries; "Esteeming it requisite," says Polybius\*, "both in order to retain his dominions in Sicily, and to preserve the Roman friendship, that Carthage should be safe; lest by its fall the remaining power should be able, without control or opposition, to execute every purpose and undertaking. And here he acted with great wisdom and prudence: For that is never, on any account, to be overlooked; nor ought such a force ever to be thrown into one hand, as to incapacitate the neighbouring states from defending their rights against it." Here is the aim of modern politics pointed out in express terms.

In short, the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning, that it is impossible it could altogether have escaped antiquity, where we find, in other particulars, so many marks of deep penetration and discernment. If it was not so generally known and acknowledged as at present, it had at least an influence on all the wiser and more experienced princes and politicians. And indeed, even at present, however generally known and acknowledged among speculative reasoners, it has not, in practice, an authority much more extensive among those who govern the world.

After the fall of the Roman empire, the form of government, established by the northern conquerors, incapacitated them, in a great measure, for farther conquests, and long maintained each state in its proper boundaries. But when vassalage and the feudal militia were abolished, mankind were anew alarmed by the danger of universal monarchy, from the union of so many kingdoms and principalities in the person of the Emperor Charles. But the power of the house of Austria, founded on extensive but precarious dominions; and their riches, derived chiefly from mines of gold and silver, were more likely to decay, of themselves, from internal defects, than to overthrow all the bulwarks raised against them. In less than a century, the force of that violent and haughty face was shattered, their opulence dissipated, their splendour dissipated. A new power succeeded, more formidable to the liberties of Europe, possessing all the advantages of the former, and labouring under none of its defects, except a share of that

\* Lib. i. cap. 83.

spirit of bigotry and persecution, with which the house of Austria was so long, and still is so much infatuated.

In the general wars maintained against this ambitious power, Great Britain has stood foremost, and she still maintains her station. Beside her advantages of riches and situation, her people are animated with such a national spirit, and are so fully sensible of the blessings of their government, that we may hope their vigour never will languish in so necessary and so just a cause. On the contrary, if we may judge by the past, their passionate ardour seems rather to require some moderation; and they have oftener erred from a laudable excess than from a blameable deficiency.

In the *first* place, we seem to have been more possessed with the ancient Greek spirit of jealous emulation, than actuated by the prudent views of modern politics. Our wars with France have been begun with justice, and even perhaps from necessity, but have always been too far pushed, from obstinacy and passion. The same peace, which was afterwards made at Ryswick in 1697, was offered so early as the year ninety-two; that concluded at Utrecht in 1712 might have been finished on as good conditions at Gertruytenberg in the year eight; and we might have given at Frankfort, in 1743, the same terms which we were glad to accept of at Aix-la-Chapelle in the year forty-eight. Here then we see, that above half of our wars with France, and all our public debts, are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence, than to the ambition of our neighbours.

In the *second* place, we are so declared in our opposition to French power, and so alert in defence of our allies, that they always reckon upon our force as upon their own; and expecting to carry on war at our expense, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation. *Habent subjectos, tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos.* All the world knows, that the factious vote of the House of Commons, in the beginning of the last parliament, with the professed humour of the nation, made the Queen of Hungary inflexible in her terms, and prevented that agreement which would immediately have restored the general Europe.

In the *third* place, we are such true combatants, engaged, we lose all concern for ourselves and consider only how we may best annoy the enemy, our revenues at so deep a rate in wars where we are, was surely the most fatal delusion that any pretensions to politics and prudence, has ever of. That remedy of funding, if it be a remedy at all, ought, in all reason, to be reserved to the last, and no evil, but the greatest and most urgent, should ever make us to embrace so dangerous an expedient. †

Those excesses, to which we have been carried, are prejudicial, and may, perhaps, in time, become still more prejudicial another way, by begotting, as is usual, the opposite extreme, and rendering us totally careless and supine with regard to the fate of Europe. The Athenians, from the most bustling, intriguing, warlike, people of Greece, finding their error in thrusting themselves into every quarrel, abandoned all attention to foreign affairs; and in no contest ever took part on either side, except by their flatteries and complaisance to the victor.

Enormous monarchies are probably destructive to human nature in their progress, in their continuance\*, and even in their downfall, which never can be very distant from their establishment. The military genius, which aggrandized the monarchy, soon leaves the court, the capital, and the centre of such a government, while the wars are carried on at a great distance, and interest so small a part of the state. The ancient nobility, whose affections attach them to their sovereign, live all at court, and never will accept of military employments, which would carry them to remote and barbarous frontiers, where they are distant both from their pleasures and their fortune. The arms of the state must therefore be entrusted to mercenary strangers, without zeal, without attachment, without honour, ready on every occasion to turn them against the prince, and join each desperate malcontent who offers pay and plunder. This is the necessary progress of human affairs. Thus human nature checks itself in its airy elevation; thus ambition blindly labours for the destruction of the conqueror, of his family, and of every thing near and dear to him. The Bourbons, trusting to the support of their brave, faithful, and affectionate nobility, would push their advantage without reserve or limitation. These, while fired with glory and emulation, can bear the fatigues and dangers of war; but never would submit to languish in the garrisons of Hungary or Lithuania, forgot at court, and sacrificed to the intrigues of every minion or mistress who would ruin the state. The troops are filled with Cravates and are intermingled, perhaps, with a few from the provinces; and the melancholy from the same cause, is renewed by the dissolution of the monarchy.

\* it could only proceed from this, that man in a civilized condition, before its establishment.



## ESSAY XVIII.

## THAT POLITICS MAY BE REDUCED TO A SCIENCE.

It is a question with several, whether there be any essential difference between one form of government and another? and, whether every form may not become good or bad, according as it is well or ill administered\*? Were it once admitted, that all governments are alike, and that the only difference consists in the character and conduct of the governors, most political disputes would be at an end, and all *zeal* for one constitution above another must be esteemed mere bigotry and folly. But, though a friend to moderation, I cannot forbear condemning this sentiment, and should be sorry to think, that human affairs admit of no greater stability, than what they receive from the casual humours and characters of particular men.

It is true, those who maintain, that the goodness of all government consists in the goodness of the administration, may cite many particular instances in history, where the very same government, in different hands, has varied suddenly into the two opposite extremes of good and bad. Compare the French government under Henry III and under Henry IV. Oppression, levity, artifice on the part of the rulers; faction, sedition, treachery, rebellion, disloyalty on the part of the subjects: These compose the character of the former miserable era. But when the patriot and heroic prince, who succeeded, was once firmly seated on the throne, the government, the people, every thing, seemed to be totally changed; and all from the difference of the temper and conduct of these two sovereigns. Instances of this kind may be multiplied, almost without number, from ancient as well as modern history, foreign as well as domestic.

But here it may be proper to make a distinction. All absolute governments must very much depend on the administration; and this is one of the great inconveniences attending that form of government. But a republican and free government would be an obvious absurdity, if the particular checks and controls, provided by the constitution, had really no influence, and made it no interest, even of bad men, to act for the public good. Such is the intention of these forms of government, and such is their real effect, where they are wisely constituted: As, on the other hand, they are the source of all disorder, and of the blackest crimes, where either skill or honesty has been wanting in the original frame and institution.

For forms of government let fools contest,  
Whate'er is best administered is best.

ESSAY ON MAN, BOOK 2.

So great is the force of laws, and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us.

The constitution of the Roman republic gave the whole legislative power to the people, without allowing a negative voice either to the nobility or consuls. This unbounded power they possessed in a collective, not in a representative body. The consequences were:—When the people, by success and conquest, had become very numerous, and had spread themselves to a great distance from the capital, the city tribes, though the most contemptible, carried almost every vote: They were therefore, most cajoled by every one that affected popularity: They were supported in idleness by the general distribution of corn, and by particular bribes, which they received from almost every candidate: By this means, they became every day more licentious, and the Campus Martius was a perpetual scene of tumult and sedition: Armed slaves were introduced among these rascally citizens; so that the whole government fell into anarchy; and the greatest happiness, which the Romans could look for, was the despotic power of the Cæsars. Such are the effects of democracy without a representative.

A Nobility may possess the whole, or any part of the legislative power of a state, in two different ways. Either every nobleman shares the power as a part of the whole body, or the whole body enjoys the power as composed of parts, which have each a distinct power and authority. The Venetian aristocracy is an instance of the first kind of government; the Polish, of the second. In the Venetian government the whole body of nobility possesses the whole power, and no nobleman has any authority which he receives not from the whole. In the Polish government every nobleman, by means of his title, has a distinct hereditary authority over his vassals; and the whole body has no authority but what it receives from the concurrence of its parts. The different

At these two species of government  
*First.* A Venetian nobility is  
 composed of men be-  
 lieved to possess their power in  
 order, both among themselves,  
 and have authority enough to  
 be nobles will preserve their  
 it any grievous tyranny, or  
 use such a tyrannical govern-  
 the whole body, however it  
 be will be a distinction of  
 but this will be the

distinction in the state. The whole nobility will form one body, and the whole people, another, without any of those private feuds and animosities, which spread ruin and desolation every where. It is easy to see the disadvantages of a Polish nobility in every one of these particulars.

It is possible so to constitute a free government, as that a single person, call him a doge, prince, or king, shall possess a large share of power, and shall form a proper balance or counterpoise to the other parts of the legislature. This chief magistrate may be either *elective* or *hereditary*; and though the former institution may, to a superficial view, appear the most advantageous; yet a more accurate inspection will discover in it greater inconveniences than in the latter, and such as are founded on causes and principles eternal and immutable. The filling of the throne, in such a government, is a point of too great and too general interest, not to divide the whole people into factions: Whence a civil war, the greatest of ills, may be apprehended, almost with certainty, upon every vacancy. The prince elected must be either a *Foreigner* or a *Native*: The former will be ignorant of the people whom he is to govern; suspicious of his new subjects, and suspected by them; giving his confidence entirely to strangers, who will have no other care but of enriching themselves in the quickest manner while their master's favour and authority are able to support them. A native will carry into the throne all his private animosities and friendships, and will never be viewed in his elevation without exciting the sentiment of envy in those who formerly considered him as their equal. Not to mention that a crown is too high a reward ever to be given to merit alone, and will always induce the candidates to employ force, or money, or intrigue, to procure the votes of the electors: So that such an election will give no better chance for superior merit in the prince, than if the state had trusted to birth alone for determining the sovereign.

It may therefore be pronounced as an universal axiom in politics, *That an hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives form the best MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY, and DEMOCRACY.* But to say more fully, that politics admit of general truths, which are applicable by the humour or education either of subject or sovereign, it may not be amiss to observe some other principles of this science, which may seem to deserve that character.

It may easily be observed, that, though free governments have been commonly the most happy for those who inhabit them; yet are they the most ruinous and oppressive to their provinces: And this observation may, I believe, be fixed as a maxim of the kind we are here speaking of. When a monarch

extends his dominions by conquest, he soon learns to consider his old and his new subjects as on the same footing; because, in reality, all his subjects are to him the same, except the few friends and favourites with whom he is personally acquainted. He does not, therefore, make any distinction between them in his *general* laws; and, at the same time, is careful to prevent all *particular* acts of oppression on the one as well as on the other. But a free state necessarily makes a great distinction, and must always do so, till men learn to love their neighbours as well as themselves. The conquerors, in such a government, are all legislators, and will be sure to contrive matters, by restrictions on trade, and by taxes, so as to draw some private, as well as public advantage from their conquests. Provincial governors have also a better chance, in a republic, to escape with their plunder, by means of bribery or intrigue; and their fellow-citizens, who find their own state to be enriched by the spoils of the subject provinces, will be the more inclined to tolerate such abuses. Not to mention, that it is a necessary precaution in a free state to change the governors frequently; which obliges these temporary tyrants to be more expeditious and rapacious, that they may accumulate sufficient wealth before they give place to their successors. What cruel tyrants were the Romans over the world during the time of their commonwealth! It is true, they had laws to prevent oppression in their provincial magistrates; but Cicero informs us, that the Romans could not better consult the interests of the provinces than by repealing these very laws. For, in that case, says he, our magistrates, having entire impunity, would plunder no more than would satisfy their own rapaciousness; whereas, at present, they must also satisfy that of their judges, and of all the great men in Rome, of whose protection they stand in need. Who can read of the cruelties and oppressions of Verres without horror and astonishment? And who is not touched with indignation to hear, that after Cicero had exhausted on that abandoned criminal all the thunders of his eloquence, and had prevailed so far as to get him condemned to the utmost extent of the laws; yet that cruel tyrant lived peaceably to old age, in opulence and ease; and ten years afterwards was put into the proscription by Mark Antony, on account of his exorbitant wealth, where he fell with Cicero himself, and all the most virtuous men of Rome? After the dissolution of the commonwealth, the Roman yoke became easier upon the provinces, as Tacitus informs us;\* and it was observed, that many of the worst emperors, Domitian,† and others, were careful to prevent all oppression on the provinces. At Nerva's time, Gaul was esteemed richer than Italy

\* Ann. l. i. cap. 2.

† Suet. in vita Domit.

† Regnum resumptum libertati tempus, si ipsi florentes, quam inops Italia, quam imbecilla urbana plebs, nisi regnum in exortibus, nisi quod externum cogitarent.—Tacit. Ann. lib. III.

itself: Nor do I find, during the whole time of the Roman monarchy, that the empire became less rich or populous in any of its provinces; though indeed its valour and military discipline were always upon the decline. The oppression and tyranny of the Carthaginians over their subject states in Africa went so far, as we learn from Polybius,\* that, not content with exacting the half of all the produce of the land, which of itself was a very high rent, they also loaded them with many other taxes. If we pass from ancient to modern times, we shall still find the observation to hold. The provinces of absolute monarchies are always better treated than those of free states. Compare the *Pais conquis* of France with Ireland, and you will be convinced of this truth; though this latter kingdom, being, in a good measure, peopled from England, possesses so many rights and privileges as should naturally make it challenge better treatment than that of a conquered province. Corsica is also an obvious instance to the same purpose.

There is an observation of Machiavel, with regard to the conquests of Alexander the Great, which, I think, may be regarded as one of those eternal political truths, which no time nor accidents can vary. It may seem strange, says that politician, that such sudden conquests, as those of Alexander, should be possessed so peaceably by his successors; and that the Persians, during all the confusions and civil wars among the Greeks, never made the smallest effort towards the recovery of their former independent government. To satisfy us concerning the cause of this remarkable event, we may consider, that a monarch may govern his subjects in two different ways. He may either follow the maxims of the eastern princes, and stretch his authority so far as to leave no distinction of rank among his subjects, but what proceeds immediately from himself; no advantages of birth; no hereditary honours and possessions; and, in short, no credit among the people, except from his commission alone. Or a monarch may exert his power after a different manner, like other European princes; and leave other sources of honour beside his smile and favour: Birth, titles, possessions, talents, integrity, knowledge, or great and fortunate services. In the first species of government, after a monarch has once succeeded, he is not to shake off the yoke; since no one possesses among the people so much personal credit and authority as he, such an enterprise: Whereas, in the latter, the monarch, or a second among the victors, will encourage the people to undertake, who have leaders ready to

Such is the reasoning

\* Lib. i. cap. 7

conclusive; though I wish he had not mixed falsehood with truth, in asserting, that monarchies, governed according to eastern policy, though more easily kept when once subdued, yet are the most difficult to subdue; since they cannot contain any powerful subject, whose discontent and faction may facilitate the enterprises of an enemy. For besides, that such a tyrannical government enervates the courage of men, and renders them indifferent towards the fortunes of their sovereign; besides this, I say, we find by experience, that even the temporary and delegated authority of the generals and magistrates, being always, in such governments, as absolute within its sphere, as that of the prince himself, is able, with barbarians, accustomed to a blind submission, to produce the most dangerous and fatal revolutions. So that in every respect, a gentle government is preferable, and gives the greatest security to the sovereign as well as to the subject.

Legislators, therefore, ought not to trust the future government of a state entirely to chance, but ought to provide a system of laws to regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity. Effects will always correspond to causes; and wise regulations, in any commonwealth, are the most valuable legacy that can be left to future ages. In the smallest court or office, the stated forms and methods, by which business must be conducted, are found to be a considerable check on the natural depravity of mankind. Why should not the case be the same in public affairs? Can we ascribe the stability and wisdom of the Venetian government, through so many ages, to any thing but the form of government? And is it not easy to point out those defects in the original constitution, which produced the tumultuous governments of Athens and Rome, and ended at last in the ruin of these two famous republics? And so little dependence has this affair on the humours and education of particular men, that one part of the same republic may be wisely conducted, and another weakly, by the very same men, merely on account of the differences of the forms and institutions by which these parts are regulated. Historians inform us that this was actually the case. For while the state was always full of sedition, and tumult, and disorder, the bank of St. George, which had become a considerable part of the people, was conducted, for several ages, with the utmost integrity and wisdom.\*

The ages of greatest public spirit are not always most eminent

*che non si può vedere dentro ad un medesimo cerchio, fra medesimi cittadini, la libertà, e la tirannide, la vite civile et la corrotta, la giustizia et la licenza; perche quello ordine solo mantiene quella città piena di costumi antichi et venerabili. E s'egli avvenisse (che col tempo in ogni stato suverano) que San Giorgio tutta quel la città occupasse, sarebbe quella una Republica più che la Venetiana memorabile.—Della Hist. Fiorentina, lib. viii.*

for private virtue. Good laws may beget order and moderation in the government, where the manners and customs have instilled little humanity or justice into the tempers of men. The most illustrious period of the Roman history, considered in a political view, is that between the beginning of the first and end of the last Punic war; the due balance between the nobility and people being then fixed by the contests of the tribunes, and not being yet lost by the extent of conquests. Yet at this very time, the horrid practice of poisoning was so common, that, during part of the season, a *Prætor* punished capitally for this crime above three thousand\* persons in a part of Italy; and found informations of this nature still multiplying upon him. There is a similar, or rather a worse instance†, in the more early times of the commonwealth. So depraved in private life were that people, whom in their histories we so much admire. I doubt not but they were really more virtuous during the time of the two *Triumvirates*; when they were tearing their common country to pieces, and spreading slaughter and desolation over the face of the earth, merely for the choice of tyrants‡.

Here, then, is a sufficient inducement to maintain, with the utmost zeal, in every free state, those forms and institutions, by which liberty is secured, the public good consulted, and the avarice or ambition of particular men restrained and punished. Nothing does more honour to human nature, than to see it susceptible of so noble a passion; as nothing can be a greater indication of meanness of heart in any man than to see him destitute of it. A man who loves only himself, without regard to friendship and desert, merits the severest blame; and a man, who is only susceptible of friendship without public spirit, or a regard to the community, is deficient in the most essential part of virtue.

But this is a subject which need not be long insisted on at present. There are even persons on both sides, who kindle up the passions of their partisans, and, under pretence of public good, pursue the interests and ends of their particular factions. For my part, I shall always be more fond of promoting moderation than zeal; though perhaps the worst way of promoting moderation in every party, is by representing the faults of the other. Let us therefore try, if it be possible, to be our own foregoers; to draw a lesson of moderation with regard to the party which our country is at present divided; at the same time we allow not this moderation to slack the industry, or the vigour with which every individual is bound to pursue the good of the country.

\* T. Livii, lib. xl. cap. 43.

† L'Aigle contre l'Aigle,  
Combatans seulement.

‡ T. Livii lib. viii. cap. 10.

Those who either attack or defend a minister in such a government as ours, where the utmost liberty is allowed, always carry matters to an extreme, and exaggerate his merit or demerit with regard to the public. His enemies are sure to charge him with the greatest enormities, both in domestic and foreign management; and there is no meanness or crime, of which, in their account, he is not capable. Unnecessary wars, scandalous treaties, profusion of public treasure, oppressive taxes, every kind of maladministration is ascribed to him. To aggravate the charge, his pernicious conduct, it is said, will extend its baneful influence even to posterity, by undermining the best constitution in the world, and disordering that wise system of laws, institutions, and customs, by which our ancestors, during so many centuries, have been so happily governed. He is not only a wicked minister in himself, but has removed every security provided against wicked ministers for the future.

On the other hand, the partisans of the minister make his panegyric run as high as the accusation against him, and celebrate his wise, steady, and moderate conduct in every part of his administration. The honour and interest of the nation supported abroad, public credit maintained at home, persecution restrained, faction subdued; the merit of all these blessings is ascribed solely to the minister. At the same time, he crowns all his other merits by a religious care of the best constitution in the world, which he has preserved in all its parts, and has transmitted entire, to be the happiness and security of the latest posterity.

When this accusation and panegyric are received by the partisans of each party, no wonder they beget an extraordinary ferment on both sides, and fill the nation with violent animosities. But I would fain persuade these party zealots, that there is a flat contradiction both in the accusation and panegyric, and that it were impossible for either of them to run so high, were it not for this contradiction. If our constitution be really *that noble fabric, the pride of Britain, the very of our magnificence, raised by the arms of many centuries, repaired at the expense of so many millions, and supported by such a prodigious blood\**, I say, if it were really such as it is represented to be, it would never have suffered to be attacked and rent, and to be so long and so violently opposed by a party of twenty years, who exercised the utmost liberty of speech and pen in parliament, and in their frequent appeals to the nation. But if the minister be wicked and weak, to the constitution itself is ascribed the blame, and he cannot consistently be charged





## ESSAY XIX.

## OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT.

As no party, in the present age, can well support itself without a philosophical or speculative system of principles annexed to its political or practical one, we accordingly find, that each of the factions, into which this nation is divided, has reared up a fabric of the former kind, in order to protect and cover that scheme of actions which it pursues. The people being commonly very rude builders, especially in this speculative way, and more especially still when actuated by party zeal; it is natural to imagine, that their workmanship must be a little unshapely, and discover evident marks of that violence and hurry in which it was raised. The one party, by tracing up government to the Deity, endeavour to render it so sacred and inviolate, that it must be little less than sacrilege, however tyrannical it may become, to touch or invade it, in the smallest article. The other party, by founding government altogether on the consent of the People, suppose that there is a kind of *original contract*, by which the subjects have tacitly reserved the power of resisting the sovereign, whenever they find themselves aggrieved by that authority, with which they have, for certain purposes, voluntarily entrusted him. These are the speculative principles of the two parties; and these too are the practical consequences deduced from them.

I shall venture to affirm, *That both these systems of speculative principles are just; though not in the sense intended by the parties. And, that both the schemes of practical consequences are prudent; though not in the extremes to which each party, in opposition to the other, has commonly endeavoured to carry them.*

That the Deity is the ultimate source of all government, will never be denied by any. The general providence, and allow, that all events are conducted by an uniform and direct course of providence. As it is impossible for the least in any comfortable and secure situation of government, this institution must be founded on the consent of the people. It is a place of all countries, and it is still greater certainty, that who can never be deceived at or since he gave rise to it, not by any particular or efficacy, but by his concealed and universal efficacy, cannot, properly speaking, be called his sovereign in any other sense than every power or force, being derived from him, and not by his commission. What-

ever actually happens is comprehended in the general plan or intention of Providence; nor has the greatest and most lawful prince any more reason, upon that account, to plead a peculiar sacredness or inviolable authority, than an inferior magistrate, or even an usurper, or even a robber and a pirate. The same Divine Superintendent, who, for wise purposes, invested a Titus or a Trajan with authority, did also, for purposes no doubt equally wise, though unknown, bestow power on a Borgia or an Angria. The same causes, which gave rise to the sovereign power in every state, established likewise every petty jurisdiction in it, and every limited authority. A constable, therefore, no less than a king, acts by a divine commission, and possesses an indefeasible right.

When we consider how nearly equal all men are in their bodily force, and even in their mental powers and faculties, till cultivated by education; we must necessarily allow, that nothing but their own consent could at first associate them together, and subject them to any authority. The people, if we trace government to its first origin in the woods and deserts, are the source of all power and jurisdiction, and voluntarily, for the sake of peace and order, abandoned their native liberty, and received laws from their equal and companion. The conditions, upon which they were willing to submit, were either expressed, or were so clear and obvious, that it might well be esteemed superfluous to express them. If this, then, be meant by the *original contract*, it cannot be denied, that all government is, at first, founded on a contract, and that the most ancient rude combinations of mankind were formed chiefly by that principle. In vain are we asked in what records this charter of our liberties is registered. It was not written on parchment, nor yet on leaves or barks of trees. It preceded the use of writing and all the other civilized arts of life. But we trace it plainly in the nature of man, and in the equality, or something approaching equality, which we find in all the individuals of that species. The force, which now prevails, and which is founded on fleets and armies, is plainly political, and derived from authority, the effect of established government. \* A man's natural force consists only in the vigour of his limbs, and the firmness of his muscles, which ~~can~~ never subject multitudes to the command of one. Nothing but their own consent, and their sense of the advantages resulting from peace and order, could have had that influence.

Yet even this consent was long very imperfect, and ~~could~~ be the basis of a regular administration. ~~It was~~ who had probably acquired his influence during the continuance of war, ruled more by persuasion than command, and till he could employ force to reduce the refractory and ~~obedient~~ the society

could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government. No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission; an idea far beyond the comprehension of savages: Each exertion of authority in the chieftain must have been particular, and called forth by the present exigencies of the case: The sensible utility, resulting from his interposition, made these exertions become daily more frequent: and their frequency gradually produced an habitual, and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary, and therefore precarious, acquiescence in the people.

But philosophers, who have embraced a party (if that be not a contradiction in terms) are not contented with these concessions. They assert, not only that government in its earliest infancy arose from consent, or rather the voluntary acquiescence of the people; but also that, even at present, when it has attained its full maturity, it rests on no other foundation. They affirm, that all men are still born equal, and owe allegiance to no prince or government, unless bound by the obligation and sanction of a *promise*. And as no man, without some equivalent, would forego the advantages of his native liberty, and subject himself to the will of another; this promise is always understood to be conditional, and imposes on him no obligation, unless he meet with justice and protection from his sovereign. These advantages the sovereign promises him in return; and if he fail in the execution, he has broken, on his part, the articles of engagement, and has thereby freed his subject from all obligations to allegiance. Such, according to these philosophers, is the foundation of authority in every government; and such the right of resistance, possessed by every subject.

But would these reasoners look abroad into the world, they would meet with nothing that, in the least, corresponds to their ideas, or can warrant so refined and philosophical a system. On the contrary, we find every where princes who claim their subjects as their property, and assert their independent right of sovereignty, from conquest or succession. We find also every where subjects who acknowledge this right in their prince, and suppose themselves under obligation of obedience to a certain

learn that they themselves and their ancestors have, for several ages, or from time immemorial, been subject to such a form of government or such a family; they immediately acquiesce, and acknowledge their obligation to allegiance. Were you to preach, in most parts of the world, that political connexions are founded altogether on voluntary consent or a mutual promise, the magistrate would soon imprison you as seditious, for loosening the ties of obedience; if your friends did not before shut you up as delirious, for advancing such absurdities. It is strange, that an act of the mind, which every individual is supposed to have formed, and after he came to the use of reason too, otherwise it could have no authority; that this act, I say, should be so much unknown to all of them, that, over the face of the whole earth there scarcely remain any traces or memory of it.

But the contract, on which government is founded, is said to be the *original contract*; and consequently may be supposed too old to fall under the knowledge of the present generation. If the agreement, by which savage men first associated and conjoined their force, be here meant, this is acknowledged to be real; but being so ancient, and being obliterated by a thousand changes of government and princes, it cannot now be supposed to retain any authority. If we would say any thing to the purpose, we must assert, that every particular government, which is lawful, and which imposes any duty of allegiance on the subject, was, at first, founded on consent and a voluntary compact. But besides that this supposes the consent of the fathers to bind the children, even to the most remote generations (which republican writers will never allow), besides this, I say, it is not justified by history or experience in any age or country of the world.

Almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in history, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both; without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people. When an artful and bold man is placed at the head of an action, it is often easy for him, by employing sometimes

of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there any thing discoverable in all these events but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of?

Even the smoothest way by which a nation may receive a foreign master, by marriage or a will, is not extremely honourable for the people; but supposes them to be disposed of like a dowry or a legacy, according to the pleasure or interest of their rulers.

But where no force interposes, and election takes place; what is this election so highly vaunted? It is either the combination of a few great men, who decide for the whole, and will allow of no opposition; or it is the fury of a multitude, that follow a seditious ringleader, who is not known, perhaps, to a dozen among them, and who owes his advancement merely to his own impudence, or to the momentary caprice of his fellows.

Are these disorderly elections, which are rare too, of such mighty authority as to be the only lawful foundation of all government and allegiance?

In reality, there is not a more terrible event than a total dissolution of government, which gives liberty to the multitude, and makes the determination or choice of a new establishment depend upon a number, which nearly approaches to that of the body of the people: For it never comes entirely to the whole body of them. Every wise man, then, wishes to be, at the head of a powerful and obedient army, a general who may speedily seize the prize, and give to the people a master which they are so unfit to choose for themselves. So little correspondent is fact and reality to those philosophical notions.

Let not the establishment at the Revolution deceive us, or make us so much in love with a philosophical origin to government, as to imagine all others monstrous and irregular. Even that event was far from corresponding to these refined ideas. It was only the succession, and that only in the regal part of the government, which was then changed: And it was only the

shall find, that that establishment was not at first made, nor any law ever voted, by a tenth part of those who were bound to pay obedience to it; not to mention the islands and foreign dominions which the Athenians claimed as theirs by right of conquest. And as it is well known that popular assemblies in that city were always full of licence and disorder, notwithstanding the institutions and laws by which they were checked; how much more disorderly must they prove, where they form not the established constitution, but meet tumultuously on the dissolution of the ancient government, in order to give rise to a new one? How chimerical must it be to talk of a choice in such circumstances?

The Achæans enjoyed the freest and most perfect democracy of all antiquity; yet they employed force to oblige some cities to enter into their league, as we learn from Polybius\*

Harry IV. and Harry VII. of England had really no title to the throne but a parliamentary election; yet they never would acknowledge it, lest they should thereby weaken their authority. Strange, if the only real foundation of all authority be consent and promise?

It is vain to say, that all governments are, or should be, at first founded on popular consent, as much as the necessity of human affairs will admit. This favours entirely my pretension. I maintain, that human affairs will never admit of this consent, seldom of the appearance of it; but that conquest or usurpation, that is, in plain terms, force, by dissolving the ancient governments, is the origin of almost all the new ones which were ever established in the world. And that in the few cases where consent may seem to have taken place, it was commonly so irregular, so confined or so much intermixed either with fraud or violence, that it cannot have any great authority.

My intention here is not to deny the consent of the people from being one just foundation of government, where it has place. It is surely the best and most sacred. I only contend, that it has very seldom had place in any government, and never almost in its full extent; and that therefore, the foundation of

on consent, and was fully canvassed by every member of the society: But this state of perfection is likewise much superior to human nature. Reason, history, and experience shew us, that all political societies have had an origin much less accurate and regular; and were one to choose a period of time when the people's consent was the least regarded in public transactions, it would be precisely on the establishment of a new government. In a settled constitution their inclinations are often consulted; but during the fury of revolutions, conquests, and public convulsions, military force or political craft usually decides the controversy.

When a new government is established, by whatever means, the people are commonly dissatisfied with it, and pay obedience more from fear and necessity, than from any idea of allegiance or of moral obligation. The prince is watchful and jealous, and must carefully guard against every beginning or appearance of insurrection. Time, by degrees, removes all these difficulties, and accustoms the nation to regard, as their lawful or native princes, that family which at first they considered as usurpers or foreign conquerors. In order to found this opinion, they have no recourse to any notion or voluntary consent or promise, which, they know, never was in this case, either expected or demanded. The original establishment was formed by violence, and submitted to from necessity. The subsequent administration is also supported by power, and acquiesced in by the people, not as a matter of choice, but of obligation. They imagine not that their consent gives their prince a title: But they willingly consent, because they think, that, from long possession, he has acquired a title, independent of their choice or inclination.

Should it be said, that, by living under the dominion of a prince which one might leave, every individual has given a tacit consent to his authority, and must pay him obedience; it may be answered, that such an imputed consent can only have place where a man imagines that he is free: the matter depends on his choice. But where he thinks himself bound, he is bound, and where he is bound, he is not free.



What if the prince forbid his subjects to quit his dominions; as in Tiberius's time, it was regarded as a crime in a Roman knight that he had attempted to fly to the Parthians, in order to escape the tyranny of that emperor? Or as the ancient Muscovites prohibited all travelling under pain of death? And did a prince observe, that many of his subjects were seized with the frenzy of migrating to foreign countries, he would, doubtless, with great reason and justice, restrain them, in order to prevent the depopulation of his own kingdom. Would he forfeit the allegiance of all his subjects by so wise and reasonable a law? Yet the freedom of their choice is surely, in that case, ravished from them.

A company of men, who should leave their native country, in order to people some uninhabited region, might dream of recovering their native freedom, but they would soon find, that their prince still laid claim to them, and called them his subjects, even in their new settlement. And in this he would but act conformably to the common ideas of mankind.

The truest *tacit* consent of this kind that is ever observed, is when a foreigner settles in any country, and is beforehand acquainted with the prince, and government, and laws to which he must submit: Yet is his allegiance, though more voluntary, much less expected or depended on, than that of a natural born subject. On the contrary, his native prince still asserts a claim to him. And if he punish not the renegade, when he seizes him in war with his new prince's commission; his clemency is not founded on the municipal law, which in all countries condemns the prisoner; but on the consent of princes, who have agreed to this indulgence, in order to prevent reprisals.

Did one generation of men go off the stage at once, and another succeed, as is the case with silk worms and butterflies, the new race, if they had sense enough to choose their government, which surely is never the case with men, might voluntarily, and by general consent, establish their own form of civil polity, without any regard to the laws or precedents which prevailed among their ancestors. But as human society is in perpetual flux, one man every day

But violent innovations no individual is entitled to make: They are even dangerous to be attempted by the legislature: More ill than good is ever to be expected from them: And if history affords examples to the contrary, they are not to be drawn into precedent, and are only to be regarded as proofs, that the science of politics affords few rules, which will not admit of some exception, and which may not sometimes be controlled by fortune and accident. The violent innovations in the reign of Henry VIII. proceeded from an imperious monarch, seconded by the appearance of legislative authority: Those in the reign of Charles I. were derived from faction and fanaticism; and both of them have proved happy in the issue. But even the former were long the source of many disorders, and still more dangers; and if the measures of allegiance were to be taken from the latter, a total anarchy must have place in human society, and a final period at once be put to every government.

Suppose, that an usurper, after having banished his lawful prince and royal family, should establish his dominion for ten or a dozen years in any country, and should preserve so exact a discipline in his troops, and so regular a disposition in his garrisons, that no insurrection had ever been raised, or even murmur heard against his administration: Can it be asserted, that the people, who in their hearts abhor his treason, have tacitly consented to his authority, and promised him allegiance, merely because, from necessity, they live under his dominion? Suppose again their native prince restored, by means of an army, which he levies in foreign countries: They receive him with joy and exultation, and show plainly with what reluctance they had submitted to any other yoke. I may now ask, upon what foundation the prince's title stands? Not on popular consent surely: For though the people willingly acquiesce in his authority, they never imagine that their consent made him sovereign. They consent, because they apprehend him to be already, by birth, their lawful sovereign. And as to that tacit consent, which may now be inferred from their living under his domination, this is no more than what they formerly gave to a tyrant and usurper.

But if the people, who consented to the authority of a tyrant, should afterwards find that they have done so, they would not be less honour than they deserve, or even want, and desire, than as. After the Roman dominions became too unwieldy for the republic to govern them, the people over the whole known world were grateful to Augustus for that authority which by violence was imposed over them; and they shewed an equal disposition to submit to the successor whom he left them by his last will and testament. It was afterwards their misfortune, that there never arose one family, any long regular succession;

but that their line of princes was continually broken, either by private assassinations or public rebellions. The *prætorian* bands, on the failure of every family, set up one emperor; the legions in the East a second; those in Germany, perhaps, a third: And the sword alone could decide the controversy. The condition of the people, in that mighty monarchy, was to be lamented, not because the choice of the emperor was never left to them, for that was impracticable; but because they never fell under any succession of masters who might regularly follow each other. As to the violence, and wars, and bloodshed, occasioned by every new settlement; these were not blameable, because they were inevitable.

The house of Lancaster ruled in this island about sixty years; yet the partisans of the white rose seemed daily to multiply in England. The present establishment has taken place during a still longer period. Have all views of right in another family been utterly extinguished, even though scarce any man now alive had arrived at the years of discretion when it was expelled, or could have consented to its dominion, or have promised it allegiance? A sufficient indication, surely, of the general sentiment of mankind on this head. For we blame not the partisans of the abdicated family, merely on account of the long time during which they have preserved their imaginary loyalty. We blame them for adhering to a family, which we affirm has been justly expelled, and which, from the moment the new settlement took place, had forfeited all title to authority.

But would we have a more regular, at least a more philosophical refutation of this principle of an original contract, or popular consent, perhaps the following observations may suffice:

All *moral* duties may be divided into two kinds. The *first* are those to which men are impelled by a natural instinct or immediate propensity, which operates on them, independent of all ideas of obligation, and of all views either to public or private utility. Of this nature are love of children, gratitude to benefactors, pity to the unfortunate. When we reflect on the advantage which results to society from such humane instincts, we pay them the just tribute of moral approbation and esteem: But the passions, actuated by them, feel not power and influence, antecedent to any such reflection.

The *second* kind of moral duties are such as are not supported by any original instinct of nature, but are performed entirely from a sense of obligation, when we consider the necessity of human society, and the impossibility of supporting these duties were neglected. It is thus *justice*, or a regard to the property of others, *fidelity*, or the observance of promises, become obligatory, and acquire an authority over mankind. For as it is

evident that every man loves himself better than any other person, he is naturally impelled to extend his acquisitions as much as possible; and nothing can restrain him in this propensity but reflection and experience, by which he learns the pernicious effects of that licence, and the total dissolution of society which must ensue from it. His original inclination, therefore, or instinct, is here checked and restrained by a subsequent judgment or observation.

The case is precisely the same with the political or civil duty of *allegiance*, as with the natural duties of justice and fidelity. Our primary instincts lead us, either to indulge ourselves in unlimited freedom, or to seek dominion over others; and it is reflection only which engages us to sacrifice such strong passions to the interests of peace and public order. A small degree of experience and observation suffices to teach us, that society cannot possibly be maintained without the authority of magistrates; and that this authority must soon fall into contempt, where exact obedience is not paid to it. The observation of these general and obvious interests is the source of all allegiance, and of that moral obligation which we attribute to it.

What necessity, therefore, is there to found the duty of *allegiance*, or obedience to magistrates, on that of *fidelity*, or a regard to promises, and to suppose that it is the consent of each individual which subjects him to government; when it appears that both allegiance and fidelity stand precisely on the same foundation, and are both submitted to by mankind, on account of the apparent interests and necessities of human society? We are bound to obey our sovereign, it is said, because we have given a tacit promise to that purpose. But why are we bound to observe our promise. It must here be asserted, that the commerce and intercourse of mankind, which are of such mighty advantage, can have no security where men pay no regard to their engagements. In like manner, may it be said, that men could not live at all in society, at least in a civilized society, without laws, and magistrates and judges, to prevent the encroachments of the strong upon the weak, and the violent upon the just, and to maintain the obligation of promises. The obligation like that of fidelity, is founded on the same principle, and is sustained by nothing, but by resolving that the interests and necessities of society are sufficient to bind us to it.

If the reason be asked of that obedience which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer, *because society could not subsist*; and this answer is clear and intelligible to all. Our answer is, *because we should keep our word*. Nobody, till trained in a philosophical system, can understand or relish this answer, besides this, I say, *because we should keep our word*, when it is asked, *why we are*

*bound to keep our word ?* Nor can you give any answer, but what would immediately, without any circuit, have accounted for our obligation to allegiance.

But to *whom is allegiance due, and who is our lawful sovereign ?* This question is often the most difficult of any, and liable to infinite discussions. When people are so happy that they can answer, *Our present sovereign, who inherits, in a direct line from ancestors that have governed us for many ages :* This answer admits of no reply, even though historians, in tracing up to the remotest antiquity the origin of that royal family, may find, as commonly happens, that its first authority was derived from usurpation and violence. It is confessed, that private justice, or the abstinence from the properties of others, is a most cardinal virtue. Yet reason tells us, that their is no property in durable objects, such as land or houses, when carefully examined in passing from hand to hand, but must, in some period, have been founded on fraud and injustice. The necessities of human society, neither in private nor public life, will allow of such an accurate inquiry ; and there is no virtue or moral duty, but what may, with facility, be refined away, if we indulge a false philosophy in sifting and and scrutinizing it, by every captious rule of logic, in every light or position in which it may be placed.

The questions with regard to private property have filled infinite volumes of law and philosophy, if in both we add the commentators to the original text ; and in the end, we may safely pronounce, that many of the rules there established are uncertain, ambiguous, and arbitrary. The like opinion may be formed with regard to the succession and rights of princes, and forms of government. Several cases no doubt occur, especially in the infancy of any constitution, which admit of no determination from the laws of justice and equity, and our historian Rapin pretends, that the controversy between Edward the Third and Philip De Valois was of this nature, and could be decided only by an apple to heaven, that is by war and violence.

Who shall tell me, whether Germanicus or Drusus ought to have succeeded to Tiberius, had he died, and they were both alive, without any, day or night, but by the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public ? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the elder son, because he was born before Drusus ; or the younger, because he was adopted before the birth of his brother ? Ought the right of the elder to prevail in a nation, where he had no advantage in private families ? Ought the Roman empire to be hereditary, because of two examples

to be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or to the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation?

Commodus mounted the throne after a pretty long succession of excellent emperors, who had acquired their title, not by birth, or public election, but by the fictitious rite of adoption. That bloody debauchee being murdered by a conspiracy, suddenly formed between his wench and her gallant who happened at that time to be *Prætorian Præfect*, these immediately deliberated about choosing a master to human kind, to speak in the style of those ages; and they cast their eyes on Pertinax. Before the tyrant's death was known, the *Præfect* went secretly to that senator, who, on the appearance of the soldiers, imagined that his execution had been ordered by Commodus. He was immediately saluted emperor by the officer and his attendants, cheerfully proclaimed by the populace, unwillingly submitted to by the guards, formally recognised by the senate, and passively received by the provinces and armies of the empire.

The discontent of the *Prætorian* bands broke out in a sudden sedition, which occasioned the murder of that excellent prince; and the world being now without a master, and without government, the guards thought proper to set the empire formally to sale. Julian, the purchaser, was proclaimed by the soldiers, recognised by the senate, and submitted to by the people; and must also have been submitted to by the provinces, had not the envy of the legions begotten opposition and resistance. Pescennius Niger in Syria elected himself emperor, gained the tumultuary consent of his army, and was attended with the secret good-will of the senate and people of Rome. Albinus in Britain found an equal right to set up his claim; but Severus, who governed Pannonia, prevailed in the end above both of them. That able politician and warrior, finding his own birth and dignity too much inferior to the imperial crown, professed, at first, an intention only of revenging the death of Pertinax. He marched as general into Italy, defeated Julian, and without being able to fix any precise commencement even of the soldiers' consent, he was from necessity acknowledged emperor by the senate and people, and fully established in his rights of authority by subduing Niger and Albinus.

*Inter hæc Gordians Cæsar* (says Capitolinus, speaking of another period) *sublatus a militibus. Imperator est appellatus, quia non erat alius in presenti.* It is to be remarked, that Gordian was a boy of fourteen years of age.

Instances of a like nature occur in the history of the emperors; in that of Alexander's successors; and of many other

countries: Nor can any thing be more unhappy than a despotic government of this kind; where the succession is disjointed and irregular, and must be determined on every vacancy by force or election. In a free government, the matter is often unavoidable, and is also much less dangerous. The interests of liberty may there frequently lead the people, in their own defence, to alter the succession of the crown. And the constitution, being compounded of parts, may still maintain a sufficient stability, by resting on the aristocratical or democratical members, though the monarchical be altered, from time to time, in order to accommodate it to the former.

In an absolute government, when there is no legal prince, who has a title to the throne, it may safely be determined to belong to the first occupant. Instances of this kind are but too frequent, especially in the eastern monarchies. When any race of princes expires, the will or destination of the last sovereign will be regarded as a title. Thus the edict of Lewis XIV., who called the bastard princes to the succession in case of the failure of all the legitimate princes, would, in such an event, have some authority\*. Thus the will of Charles the Second disposed of the whole Spanish monarchy. The cession of the ancient proprietor, especially when joined to conquest, is likewise deemed a good title. The general obligation, which binds us to government, is the interest and necessities of society; and this obligation is very strong. The determination of it to this or that particular prince, or form of government, is frequently more uncertain, and dubious. Present possession has considerable authority in these cases, and greater than in private property; because of the disorders which attend all revolutions and changes of government.

We shall only observe, before we conclude, that though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard, by which any controversy can ever be decided. And nothing is a clearer proof, that a theory of this kind, as Mr. Locke thinks, that men have agreed to certain laws, and to the principles, opinions or all nations and all ages. The doctrine, which founds all lawful government on an *original contract*, or consent of the people, is plain of this kind; nor has the most noted of its partisans, in the exposition of it, scrupled to affirm, that *absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society, and so can be no government at all*; and that the *supreme power* is in the people.

\* See NOTE [O.]

not take from any man, by taxes and impositions, any part of his property, without his own consent or that of his representatives\*. What authority any moral reasoning can have, which leads into opinions so wide of the general practice of mankind, in every place but this single kingdom, it is easy to determine.

The only passage I meet with in antiquity, where the obligation of obedience to government is ascribed to a promise, is in Plato's *Crito*: where Socrates refuses to escape from prison, because he had tacitly promised to obey the laws. Thus he builds a *Tory* consequence of passive obedience on a *Whig* foundation of the original contract.

New discoveries are not to be expected in these matters. If scarce any man, till very lately, ever imagined that government was founded on compact, it is certain that it cannot, in general, have any such foundation.

The crime of rebellion among the ancients was commonly expressed by the terms *νεμειν*, *novos res moliri*.

## ESSAY XX.

### OF THE ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT.

MAN, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society, from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit. The same creature, in his farther progress, is engaged to establish political society, in order to administer justice; without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. We are, therefore, to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government, as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice, or, in other words, the support of the twelve judges. Kings and parliaments, fleets and armies, officers of the court and revenue, ambassadors, ministers, and privy-counsellors, are all subordinate in their end to this part of administration. Even the clergy, as their duty leads them to inculcate moral maxims, as the thought of a future state, as regards this world, to have no other end, than to secure the peace and order of the present.

As the human mind is naturally inclined to peace and order, and as the human mind is naturally inclined to peace and order for the maintenance of society, it is not surprising this strong and obvious necessity, such is the frailty or perverseness of our nature! it is impossible to keep men, faithful and unerringly, in the paths of justice. Some extraordinary circumstances may happen, in which a man finds his interests to be more hurt by fraud or rapine, than hurt by the breach



which his injustice makes in the social union. But much more frequently he is seduced, from his great and important, but distant interests by the allurements of present, though often very frivolous temptations. This great weakness is incurable in human nature.

Men must, therefore, endeavour to palliate what they cannot cure. They must institute some persons under the appellation of magistrates, whose peculiar office it is to point out the decrees of equity, to punish transgressors, to correct fraud and violence, and to oblige men, however reluctant, to consult their own real and permanent interests. In a word, obedience is a new duty which must be invented to support that of justice, and the ties of equity must be corroborated by those of allegiance.

But still, viewing matters in an abstract light, it may be thought, that nothing is gained by this alliance, and that the factitious duty of obedience, from its very nature, lays as feeble a hold of the human mind, as the primitive and natural duty of justice. Peculiar interests and present temptations may overcome the one as well as the other. They are equally exposed to the same inconvenience. And the man, who is inclined to be a bad neighbour, must be led by the same motives, well or ill understood, to be a bad citizen and subject. Not to mention, that the magistrate himself may often be negligent, or partial, or unjust in his administration.

Experience, however, proves that there is a great difference between the cases. Order in society, we find, is much better maintained by means of government; and our duty to the magistrate is more strictly guarded by the principles of human nature, than our duty to our fellow citizens. The love of dominion is so strong in the breast of man, that many not only submit to, but court all the dangers, and fatigues, and cares of government; and men, once raised to that station, though often led astray by private passions, find, in ordinary cases, a visible interest in the impartial administration of justice. The persons who first attain this distinction by the consent, tacit or express, of the people, must be endowed with superior personal qualities of valour, force, integrity, or prudence, which command the confidence; and after government is established, birth, rank, and station, has a mighty influence over men, and enforces the decrees of the magistrate. The prince or leader exclaims against every disorder which disturbs his society. He summons all his partisans and all men of probity to aid him in correcting and redressing it: and he is readily followed by all indifferent persons in the execution of his office. He soon acquires the power of rewarding these services; and in the progress of society, he establishes subordinate ministers and often a military force, who find

an immediate and a visible interest in supporting his authority. Habit soon consolidates what other principles of human nature had imperfectly founded; and men, once accustomed to obedience, never think of departing from that path, in which they and their ancestors have constantly trod, and to which they are confined by so many urgent and visible motives.

But though this progress of human affairs may appear certain and inevitable, and though the support which allegiance brings to justice be founded on obvious principles of human nature, it cannot be expected that men should beforehand be able to discover them, or foresee their operation. Government commences more casually and more imperfectly. It is probable, that the first ascendant of one man over multitudes began during a state of war; where the superiority of courage and of genius discovers itself most visibly, where unanimity and concert are most requisite, and where the pernicious effects of disorder are most sensibly felt. The long continuance of that state, an incident common among savage tribes, inured the people to submission; and if the chieftain possessed as much equity as prudence and valour, he became, even during peace, the arbiter of all differences, and could gradually, by a mixture of force and consent, establish his authority. The benefit sensibly felt from his influence, made it be cherished by the people, at least by the peaceable and well-disposed among them; and if his son enjoyed the same good qualities, government advanced the sooner to maturity and perfection; but was still in a feeble state, till the farther progress of improvement procured the magistrate a revenue, and enabled him to bestow rewards on the several instruments of his administration, and to inflict punishments on the refractory and disobedient. Before that period, each exertion of his influence must have been particular, and founded on the peculiar circumstances of the case. After it, submission was no longer a matter of choice in the bulk of the community, but was rigorously exacted by the authority of the supreme magistrate.

In all governments, there is a perpetual intestine struggle, open or secret, between AUTHORITY and LIBERTY; and neither of them can ever ~~completely prevail in the contest~~. A great sacrifice of liberty must necessarily be made in every government; yet even the authority, which confines liberty, can never, and perhaps ought never, in any constitution, to become quite entire and uncontrollable. The sultan is master of the life and fortune of any individual; but will not be permitted to impose new taxes on his subjects. A ~~despot~~ monarch can impose taxes at pleasure; but would find it dangerous to attack the lives and fortunes of individuals. Religion also, ~~in all countries~~, is commonly found to be a very intractable principle, and other principles or prejudices frequently

resist all the authority of the civil magistrate ; whose power, being founded on opinion, can never subvert other opinions, equally rooted with that of his title to dominion. The government, which, in common appellation, receives the appellation of free, is that which admits of a partition of power among several members, whose united authority is no less, or is commonly greater, than that of any monarch ; but who, in the usual course of administration, must act by general and equal laws, that are previously known to all the members, and to all their subjects. In this sense, it must be owned, that liberty is the perfection of civil society ; but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence ; and in those contests, which so often take place between the one and the other, the latter may, on that account, challenge the preference. Unless perhaps one may say (and it may be said with some reason) that a circumstance, which is essential to the existence of civil society, must always support itself, and needs be guarded with less jealousy, than one that contributes only to its perfection, which the indolence of men is so apt to neglect, or their ignorance to overlook.

## ESSAY XXI.

### OF THE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

NOTHING appears more surprising to those who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few ; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we inquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion only that government is founded ; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The sultan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination. But even these despots are not absolute, and are, like men, by their opinion.

Opinion is of two kinds, to wit, opinion of INTEREST, and opinion of RIGHT. By opinion of interest, I chiefly understand the sense of the general advantage which is reaped from government ; together with the persuasion, that the particular government, which is established, is equally advantageous with any other that could easily be settled. When this opinion prevails among the generality of a state, or among those who have the force in their hands, it gives great security to any government.

Right is of two kinds ; right to Power and right to Property. What prevalence opinion of the first kind has over mankind, may easily be understood, by observing the attachment which all nations have to their ancient government, and even to those names which have had the sanction of antiquity. Antiquity always begets the opinion of right ; and whatever disadvantageous sentiments we may entertain of mankind, they are always found to be prodigal both of blood and treasure in the maintenance of public justice. There is, indeed, no particular, in which, at first sight, there may appear a greater contradiction in the frame of the human mind than the present. When men act in a faction they are apt, without shame or remorse, to neglect all the ties of honour and morality, in order to serve their party ; and yet, when a faction is formed upon a point of right or principle, there is no occasion where men discover a greater obstinacy, and a more determined sense of justice and equity. The same social disposition of mankind is the cause of these contradictory appearances.

It is sufficiently understood, that the opinion of right to property is of moment in all matters of government. A noted author has made property the foundation of all government ; and most of our political writers seem inclined to follow him in that particular . This is carrying the matter too far ; but still it must be owned, that the opinion of right to property has a great influence in this subject.

Upon these three opinions, therefore, of public *interest*, of *right to power*, and of *right to property*, are all governments founded, and all authority of the few over the many. There are indeed other principles, which add force to these, and determine, limit, or alter their operation ; such as *self-interest*, *fear* and *affection* : But still we may assert, that these other principles can have no influence alone, but suppose the antecedent influence of those opinions above mentioned. They are, therefore, to be esteemed the secondary, not the original principles of government.

For, *first*, as to *self-interest*, by which I mean the expectation of particular rewards, distinct from the general protection which we receive from government, it is evident that the magistrate's authority must be antecedently established, at least be hoped for, in order to produce this expectation. The prospect of reward may augment his authority with regard to some particular persons ; but can never give birth to it, with regard to the public. Men naturally look for the greatest favours from their friends and acquaintance ; and therefore, the hopes of any considerable number of the state would never centre in any particular set of men, if these men had no other title to magistracy, and had no separate influence over the opinions of mankind. The same observation may be extended to the other two principles of *fear*

and affection. No man would have any reason to *fear* the fury of a tyrant, if he had no authority over any but from fear; since, as a single man, his bodily force can reach but a small way, and all the farther power he possesses must be founded either on our own opinion, or on the presumed opinion of others. And though *affection* to wisdom and virtue in a *sovereign* extends very far, and has great influence; yet he must antecedently be supposed invested with a public character, otherwise the public esteem will serve him in no stead, nor will his virtue have any influence beyond a narrow sphere.

A government may endure for several ages, though the balance of power and the balance of property do not coincide. This chiefly happens, where any rank or order of the state has acquired a large share in the property; but, from the original constitution of the government, has no share in the power. Under what pretence would any individual of that order assume authority in public affairs? As men are commonly much attached to their ancient government, it is not to be expected, that the public would ever favour such usurpations. But where the original constitution allows any share of power, though small, to an order of men, who possess a large share of property, it is easy for them gradually to stretch their authority, and bring the balance of power to coincide with that of property. This has been the case with the House of Commons in England.

Most writers that have treated of the British government, have supposed, that, as the Lower House represents all the commons of Great Britain, its weight in the scale is proportioned to the property and power of all whom it represents. But this principle must not be received as absolutely true. For though the people are apt to attach themselves more to the House of Commons than to any other member of the constitution; that House being chosen by them as their representatives, and as the public guardians of their liberty: yet are there instances where the House, even when in opposition to the crown, has not been followed by the people; as we may particularly observe of the *Tory* House of Commons in the reign of King William. Were the members obliged to be elected by their constituents, and to be re-elected, this would entirely alter the case; and such immense power and riches, as those of all the commons of Great Britain, were brought into the scale, it is not easy to conceive, that the crown could either influence that multitude of people, or withstand that balance of property. It is true, the crown has great influence over the collective body in the elections of members; but were this influence, which at present is only exerted once in seven years, to be employed in bringing over the people to every vote, it would soon be wasted,

and no skill, popularity, or revenue could support it. I must, therefore, be of opinion, that an alteration in this particular would introduce a total alteration in our government, and would soon reduce it to a pure republic; and, perhaps, to a republic of no inconvenient form. For though the people, collected in a body like the Roman tribes, be quite unfit for government, yet, when dispersed in small bodies, they are more susceptible both of reason and order; the force of popular currents and tides is, in a great measure, broken; and the public interest may be pursued with some method and constancy. But it is needless to reason any farther concerning a form of government, which is never likely to have place in Great Britain, and which seems not to be the aim of any party amongst us. Let us cherish and improve our ancient government as much as possible, without encouraging a passion for such dangerous novelties.

## ESSAY XXII.

### OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

IN a former essay, we endeavoured to refute the *speculative* system of politics advanced in this nation; as well the religious system of the one party, as the philosophical of the other. We come now to examine the *practical* consequences deduced by each party, with regard to the measures of submission due to sovereigns.

As the obligation to justice is founded entirely on the interests of society, which require mutual abstinence from property, in order to preserve peace among mankind; it is evident, that, when the execution of justice would be attended with very pernicious consequences, that virtue must be suspended, and give place to public utility, in such extraordinary and such pressing emergencies. The maxim, *fiat Justitia et ruat Cælum*, let justice be performed, though the universe be destroyed, is apparently false, and by sacrificing the end to the means, shews a preposterous idea, of the subordination of duties. What governor of a town makes any scruple of burning the suburbs, when they facilitate the approaches of the enemy? Or what general abstains from plundering a neutral country, when the necessities of war require it; and he cannot otherwise subsist his army? The case is the same with the duty of allegiance; and common sense teaches us, that, as government binds us to obedience only on account of its tendency to public utility, that duty must always, in extraordinary cases, when public ruin would evidently attend obedience, yield to the primary and original obligation. *Salus*

*populi suprema Lex*, the safety of the people is the supreme law. This maxim is agreeable to the sentiments of mankind in all ages: Nor is only one, when he reads of the insurrections against Nero or Philip the Second, so infatuated with party systems, as not to wish success to the enterprise, and praise the undertakers. Even our high monarchical party, in spite of their sublime theory, are forced, in such cases, to judge, and feel, and approve, in conformity to the rest of mankind.

Resistance, therefore, being admitted in extraordinary emergencies, the question can only be among good reasoners, with regard to the degree of necessity, which can justify resistance, and render it lawful or commendable. And here I must confess, that I shall always incline to their side, who draw the bond of allegiance very close, and consider an infringement of it as the last refuge in desperate cases, when the public is in the greatest danger from violence and tyranny. For besides the mischiefs of a civil war, which commonly attends insurrection, it is certain, that, where a disposition to rebellion appears among any people, it is one chief cause of tyranny in the rulers, and forces them into many violent measures which they never would have embraced, had every one been inclined to submission and obedience. Thus the *tyrannicide* or assassination, approved of by ancient maxims, instead of keeping tyrants and usurpers in awe, made them ten times more fierce and unrelenting; and is now justly, upon that account, abolished by the laws of nations, and universally condemned as a base and treacherous method of bringing to justice these disturbers of society.

Besides, we must consider, that as obedience is our duty in the common course of things, it ought chiefly to be inculcated; nor can any thing be more preposterous than an anxious care and solicitude in stating all the cases in which resistance may be allowed. In like manner, though a philosopher reasonably acknowledges, in the course of an argument, that the rules of justice may be dispensed with in cases of urgent necessity; what should we think of a preacher or casuist, who should make it his chief study to find out such cases, and enforce them with all the vehemence of an unprincipled influence? Would he not be better employed in enforcing the general doctrine, than in displaying the particular exceptions, which we are, perhaps, but too much inclined, of ourselves, to embrace and to extend?

There are, however, two reasons, which may be pleaded in defence of that party among us who have, with so much industry, propagated the maxims of resistance; maxims which, it must be confessed, are, in general, so pernicious, and so destructive of civil society. The *first* is, that their antagonists, carrying the doctrine of obedience to such an extravagant height, as not only

never to mention the exceptions in extraordinary cases (which might, perhaps, be excusable), but even positively to exclude them; it became necessary to insist on these exceptions, and defend the rights of injured truth and liberty. The *second*, and, perhaps, better reason, is founded on the nature of the British constitution and form of government.

It is almost peculiar to our constitution to establish a first magistrate with such high pre-eminence and dignity, that, though limited by the laws, he is, in a manner, so far as regards his own person, above the laws, and can neither be questioned nor punished for any injury or wrong which may be committed by him. His ministers alone, or those who act by his commission, are obnoxious to justice; and while the prince is thus allured, by the prospect of personal safety, to give the laws their free course, an equal security is, in effect, obtained by the punishment of lesser offenders, and at the same time a civil war is avoided, which would be the infallible consequence, were an attack, at every turn, made directly upon the sovereign. But though the constitution pays this salutary compliment to the prince, it can never reasonably be understood, by that maxim, to have determined its own destruction, or to have established a tame submission, where he protects his ministers, perseveres in injustice, and usurps the whole power of the commonwealth. This case, indeed, is never expressly put by the laws; because it is impossible for them, in their ordinary course, to provide a remedy for it, or establish any magistrate, with superior authority, to chastise the exorbitances of the prince. But as a right without a remedy would be an absurdity; the remedy, in this case, is the extraordinary one of resistance, when affairs come to that extremity, that the constitution can be defended by it alone. Resistance, therefore, must of course, become more frequent in the British government, than in others, which are simpler, and consist of fewer parts and movements. Where the king is an absolute sovereign, he has little temptation to commit such enormous tyranny as may justly provoke rebellion. But where he is limited, his imprudent ambition, without any great vices, may run him into that perilous situation. This is frequently asserted to have been the case with Charles the First; and if we may now speak truly, after animosities are ceased, this was also the case with James the Second. These were harmless, if not, in their private character, good men; but mistaking the nature of our constitution, and engrossing the whole legislative power, it became necessary to oppose them with some vehemence; and even to deprive the latter formally of that authority, which he had used with such imprudence and indiscretion.



## ESSAY XXIII.

## OF CIVIL LIBERTY.

THOSE who employ their pens on political subjects, free from party-rage, and party-prejudices, cultivate a science, which, of all others, contributes most to public utility, and even to the private satisfaction of those who addict themselves to the study of it. I am apt, however, to entertain a suspicion, that the world is still too young to fix many general truths in politics which will remain true to the latest posterity. We have not as yet had experience of three thousand years; so that not only the art of reasoning is still imperfect in this science, as in all others, but we even want sufficient materials upon which we can reason. It is not fully known what degree of refinement, either in virtue or vice, human nature is susceptible of, nor what may be expected of mankind from any great revolution in their education, customs, or principles. Machiavel was certainly a great genius; but having confined his study to the furious and tyrannical governments of ancient times, or to the little disorderly principalities of Italy, his reasonings, especially upon monarchical government, have been found extremely defective; and there scarcely is any maxim in his *prince* which subsequent experience has not entirely refuted. "A weak prince," says he, "is incapable of receiving good counsel; for, if he consult with several, he will not be able to choose among their different counsels. If he abandon himself to one, that minister may perhaps have capacity, but he will not long be a minister. He will be sure to dispossess his master, and place himself and his family upon the throne." I mention this, among many instances of the errors of that politician, proceeding, in a great measure, from his having lived in too early an age of the world, to be a good judge of political truth. Almost all the princes of Europe are at present governed by their ministers, and have been so for near two centuries; and yet no such event has ever happened, or can possibly happen. Sejanus might project dethroning the Cæsars, but Fleury, though even so vicious, could not, while in his senses, entertain the least hopes of dispossessing the Bourbons.

Trade was never esteemed an affair of state till the last century; and there scarcely is any ancient writer on politics who has made mention of it\*. Even the Italians have kept a profound silence with regard to it, though it has now engaged the chief attention, as well of ministers of state as of speculative reasoners. The

\* Xenophon mentions it, but with a doubt if it be of any advantage to a state. *Εἰς καὶ ἐμπορίας οὐκ ἐστὶ τὸ πόλιν*, &c. XEN. HIERO.—Plato totally excludes it from his imaginary republic. De Legibus, lib. iv.

great opulence, grandeur, and military achievements of the two maritime powers, seem first to have instructed mankind in the importance of an extensive commerce.

Having therefore intended, in this essay, to make a full comparison of civil liberty and absolute government, and to show the great advantages of the former above the latter; I began to entertain a suspicion that no man in this age was sufficiently qualified for such an undertaking; and that whatever any one should advance on that head would, in all probability, be refuted by further experience, and be rejected by posterity. Such mighty revolutions have happened in human affairs, and so many events have arisen contrary to the expectation of the ancients, that they are sufficient to beget the suspicion of still further changes.

It had been observed by the ancients, that all the arts and sciences arose among free nations; and that the Persians and Egyptians, notwithstanding their ease, opulence, and luxury, made but faint efforts towards a relish in those finer pleasures, which were carried to such perfection by the Greeks, amidst continual wars, attended with poverty, and the greatest simplicity of life and manners. It had also been observed, that, when the Greeks lost their liberty, though they increased mightily in riches by means of the conquests of Alexander; yet the arts, from that moment, declined among them, and have never since been able to raise their head in that climate. Learning was transplanted to Rome, the only free nation at that time in the universe; and having met with so favourable a soil, it made prodigious shoots for above a century; till the decay of liberty produced also the decay of letters, and spread a total barbarism over the world. From these two experiments, of which each was double in its kind, and shewed the fall of learning in absolute governments, as well as its rise in popular ones, Longinus thought himself sufficiently justified in asserting, that the arts and sciences could never flourish but in a free government: And in this opinion he has been followed by several eminent writers\* in our own country, who either confined their view merely to ancient facts, or entertained too great a partiality in favour of that form of government established among us.

But what would these writers have said to the instances of modern Rome and Florence? Of which the former carried to perfection all the finer arts of sculpture, painting, and music, as well as poetry, though it groaned under tyranny, and under the tyranny of priests: While the latter made its progress in the arts and sciences after it began to lose its liberty by the usurpation of the family of Medici. Ariosto, Tasso, Galileo, no more than Raphael or Michael Angelo, were not born in republics. And though the

\* Mr. Addison and Lord Shaftesbury.

Lombard school was famous as well as the Roman, yet the Venetians have had the smallest share in its honours, and seem rather inferior to the other Italians in their genius for the arts and sciences. Rubens established his school at Antwerp, not at Amsterdam. Dresden, not Hamburgh, is the centre of politeness in Germany.

But the most eminent instance of the flourishing of learning in absolute governments is that of France, which scarcely ever enjoyed any established liberty, and yet has carried the arts and sciences as near perfection as any other nation. The English are, perhaps, greater philosophers; the Italians better painters and musicians; the Romans were greater orators: But the French are the only people, except the Greeks, who have been at once philosophers, poets, orators, historians, painters, architects, sculptors, and musicians. With regard to the stage, they have excelled even the Greeks, who far excelled the English. And in common life, they have, in a great measure, perfected that art, the most useful and agreeable of any, *l' Art de Vivre*, the art of society and conversation.

If we consider the state of the sciences and polite arts in our own country, Horace's observation, with regard to the Romans, may in a great measure be applied to the British.

——— Sod in longum tamen ævum  
Manserunt, hodieque manent *vestigia ruris*.

The elegance and propriety of style have been very much neglected among us. We have no dictionary of our language, and scarcely a tolerable grammar. The first polite prose we have was writ by a man who is still alive.\* As to Sprat, Locke, and even Temple, they knew too little of the rules of art to be esteemed elegant writers. The prose of Bacon, Harrington, and Milton, is altogether stiff and pedantic, though their sense be excellent. Men, in this country, have been so much occupied in the great disputes of *Religion, politics, and philosophy*, that they had no relish for the seemingly minute observations of grammar and criticism. And, though this turn of thinking must have considerably improved our sense and our talent of reasoning, it must be confessed, that even in those sciences above mentioned, we have not any standard-book which we can transmit to posterity: And the utmost we have to boast of are a few essays towards a more just philosophy; which indeed promise well, but have not as yet reached any degree of perfection.

It has become an established opinion, that commerce can never flourish but in a free government; and this opinion seems to be founded on a longer and larger experience than the foregoing, with regard to the arts and sciences. If we trace com-

\* Dr. Swift.

merce in its progress through Tyre, Athens, Syracuse, Carthage, Venice, Florence, Genoa, Antwerp, Holland, England, &c. we shall always find it to have fixed its seat in free governments. The three greatest trading towns now in Europe, are London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg; all free cities, and Protestant cities; that is enjoying a double liberty. It must, however, be observed, that the great jealousy entertained of late with regard to the commerce of France, seems to prove that this maxim is no more certain and infallible than the foregoing, and that the subjects of an absolute prince may become our rivals in commerce as well as in learning.

Durst I deliver my opinion in an affair of so much uncertainty, I would assert, that notwithstanding the efforts of the French, there is something hurtful to commerce inherent in the very nature of absolute government, and inseparable from it; though the reason I should assign for this opinion is somewhat different from that which is commonly insisted on. Private property seems to me almost as secure in a civilized European monarchy as in a republic; nor is danger much apprehended, in such a government, from the violence of the sovereign, more than we commonly dread harm from thunder, or earthquakes, or any accident the most unusual and extraordinary. Avarice, the spur of industry, is so obstinate a passion, and works its way through so many real dangers and difficulties, that it is not likely to be scared by an imaginary danger, which is so small, that it scarcely admits of calculation. Commerce, therefore, in my opinion, is apt to decay in absolute governments, not because it is there less *secure* but because it is less *honourable*. A subordination of rank is absolutely necessary to the support of monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches. And while these notions prevail, all the considerable traders will be tempted to throw up their commerce, in order to purchase some of those employments, to which privileges and honours are annexed.

Since I am upon this head, of the alterations which time has produced, or may produce in politics, I must observe, that all kinds of government, free and absolute, seem to have undergone, in modern times, a great change for the better, with regard both to foreign and domestic management. The *balance* of power is a secret in politics, fully known only to the present age; and I must add, that the internal police of states has also received great improvements within the last century. We are informed by Sallust, that Catiline's army was much augmented by the accession of the highwaymen about Rome; though I believe, that all of that profession who are at present dispersed over Europe would not amount to a regiment. In Cicero's pleadings for Milo,

I find this argument, among others, made use of to prove that his client had not assassinated Clodius. Had Milo, said he, intended to have killed Clodius, he had not attacked him in the day-time, and at such a distance from the city: He had way-laid him at night, near the suburbs, where it might have been pretended that he was killed by robbers; and the frequency of the accident would have favoured the deceit. This is a surprising proof of the loose policy of Rome, and of the number and force of these robbers; since Clodius\* was at that time attended by thirty slaves, who were completely armed, and sufficiently accustomed to blood and danger in the frequent tumults excited by that seditious tribune.

But though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, *that they are a government of Laws, not of men.* They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprising degree. Property is there secure; industry encouraged; the arts flourish; and the prince lives secure among his subjects, like a father among his children. There are, perhaps, and have been for two centuries, near two hundred absolute princes, great and small, in Europe; and allowing twenty years to each reign, we may suppose, that there have been, in the whole, two thousand monarchs or tyrants, as the Greeks would have called them: Yet of these there has not been one, not even Philip II. of Spain, so bad as Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, who were four in twelve amongst the Roman emperors. It must, however, be confessed, that though monarchical governments have approached nearer to popular ones, in gentleness and stability, they are still inferior. Our modern education and customs instil more humanity and moderation than the ancient; but have not as yet been able to overcome entirely the disadvantages of that form of government.

But here I must beg leave to advance a conjecture, which seems probable, but which posterity alone can fully judge of. I am apt to think, that in monarchical governments there is a source of improvement, and in popular governments a source of degeneracy which in time will bring these species of civil polity still nearer an equality. The greatest abuses, which arise in France, the most perfect model of pure monarchy, proceed not from the number or weight of the taxes, beyond what are to be met with in free countries; but from the expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate method of levying them, by which the industry of the poor, es-

\* Vide Asc. Ped. in Orat. pro Milone.

pecially of the peasants and farmers, is, in a great measure, discouraged, and agriculture rendered a beggarly and slavish employment. But to whose advantage do these abuses tend? If to that of the nobility, they might be esteemed inherent in that form of government; since the nobility are the true supports of monarchy; and it is natural their interest should be more consulted, in such a constitution, than that of the people. But the nobility are, in reality, the chief losers by this oppression; since it ruins their estates, and beggars their tenants. The only gainers by it are the *Financiers*; a race of men rather odious to the nobility and the whole kingdom. If a prince or minister, therefore, should arise, endowed with sufficient discernment to know his own and the public interest, and with sufficient force of mind to break through ancient customs, we might expect to see these abuses remedied; in which case the difference between that absolute government and our free one would not appear so considerable as at present.

The source of degeneracy, which may be remarked in free governments, consists in the practice of contracting debt, and mortgaging the public revenues, by which taxes may, in time, become altogether intolerable, and all the property of the state be brought into the hands of the public. This practice is of modern date. The Athenians, though governed by a republic, paid near two hundred *per cent.* for those sums of money, which any emergency made it necessary for them to borrow; as we learn from Xenophon\*. Among the moderns, the Dutch first introduced the practice of borrowing great sums at low interest, and have well nigh ruined themselves by it. Absolute princes have also contracted debt; but as an absolute prince may make a bankruptcy when he pleases, his people can never be oppressed by his debts. In popular governments, the people, and chiefly those who have the highest offices, being commonly the public creditors, it is difficult for the state to make use of this remedy, which, however it may sometimes be necessary, is always cruel and barbarous. This, therefore, seems to be an inconvenience, which nearly threatens all free governments; especially our own, at the present juncture of affairs. And what a strong motive is this, to increase our frugality of public money; lest, for want of it, we be reduced, by the multiplicity of taxes, or what is worse, by our public impotence and inability for defence, to curse our very liberty, and wish ourselves in the same state of servitude with all the nations that surround us?

\* Κτ' αὖτε δὲ ἀπ' οὐδενος αὖ οὕτω καλὴν κτήσαντο ὥσπερ ἀπ' οὐ ἀνπροτελισσῶν εἰς τὴν ἀπόρρητον—οἱ δὲ γε πλείους Ἀθηναίων πλείονα ληφόνται κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ὅσα οὐκ ἐπιστρέφουσιν, οἱ γὰρ μὲν ἀνπροτελισσάντες, ἐγγὺς δύοσι μὲν προσδοκῶν εἰς σί, — ὁ δὲ φοβεῖ τῶν ἀνδραπομῶν ἀσφαλίστατον τε πολυχρονιωτάτων εἶναι. ΞΕΝ. ΠΟΡΟΙ.

## ESSAY XXIV.

## OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

NOTHING is more apt to surprise a foreigner, than the extreme liberty, which we enjoy in this country, of communicating whatever we please to the public, and of openly censuring every measure entered into by the King or his ministers. If the administration resolve upon war, it is affirmed, that, either wilfully or ignorantly, they mistake the interests of the nation; and that peace, in the present situation of affairs, is infinitely preferable. If the passion of the ministers lie towards peace, our political writers breathe nothing but war and devastation, and represent the pacific conduct of the government as mean and pusillanimous. As this liberty is not indulged in any other government, either republican or monarchical; in Holland and Venice, more than in France or Spain; it may very naturally give occasion to the question, *How it happens that Great Britain alone enjoys this peculiar privilege?*

The reason, why the laws indulge us in such a liberty, seems to be derived from our mixed form of government, which is neither wholly monarchical, nor wholly republican. It will be found, if I mistake not, a true observation in politics, that the two extremes in government, liberty and slavery, commonly approach nearest to each other; and that, as you depart from the extremes, and mix a little of monarchy with liberty, the government becomes always the more free; and, on the other hand, when you mix a little of liberty with monarchy, the yoke becomes always the more grievous and intolerable. In a government, such as that of France, which is absolute, and where law, custom, and religion concur, all of them, to make the people fully satisfied with their condition, the monarch cannot entertain any *jealousy* against his subjects, and therefore is apt to indulge them in great *liberties* both of speech and action. In a government altogether republican, such as that of Holland, where there is no magistrate so eminent as to give *jealousy* to the state, there is no danger in intrusting the magistrates with large discretionary powers; and though many advantages result from such powers, in preserving peace and order, yet they lay a considerable restraint on men's actions, and make every private citizen pay a great respect to the government. Thus it seems evident that the two extremes of absolute monarchy and of a republic, approach near to each other in some material circumstances. In the *first*, the magistrate has no *jealousy* of the people; in the *second*, the people have none of the magistrate: Which want of *jealousy* begets a mutual confidence and trust in both cases, and produces a species of liberty in monarchies, and of arbitrary power in republics.

To justify the other part of the foregoing observation, that, in every government, the means are most wide of each other, and that the mixtures of monarchy and liberty render the yoke either more easy or more grievous; I must take notice of a remark in Tacitus with regard to the Romans, under the emperors, that they neither could bear total slavery nor total liberty, *Nec totam servitutem, nec totam libertatem pati possunt*. This remark a celebrated poet has translated and applied to the English, in his lively description of Queen Elizabeth's policy and government,

Et fit aimer son joug à l'Anglois indompté,  
Qui ne peut ni servir, ni vivre en liberté

HENRIADE, liv. 1.

According to these remarks, we are to consider the Roman government under the emperors as a mixture of despotism and liberty, where the despotism prevailed; and the English government as a mixture of the same kind, where the liberty predominates. The consequences are conformable to the foregoing observation; and such as may be expected from those mixed forms of government, which beget a mutual watchfulness and jealousy. The Roman emperors were, many of them, the most frightful tyrants that ever disgraced human nature; and it is evident, that their cruelty was chiefly excited by their *jealousy*, and by their observing that all the great men of Rome bore with impatience the dominion of a family, which, but a little before, was nowise superior to their own. On the other hand, as the republican part of the government prevails in England, though with a great mixture of monarchy, it is obliged, for its own preservation, to maintain a watchful *jealousy* over the magistrates, to remove all discretionary powers, and to secure every one's life and fortune by general and inflexible laws. No action must be deemed a crime but what the law has plainly determined to be such: No crime must be imputed to a man but from a legal proof before his judges; and even these judges must be his fellow-subjects, who are obliged, by their own interest, to have a watchful eye over the encroachments and violence of the ministers. From these causes it proceeds, that there is as much liberty, and even, perhaps, licentiousness in Great Britain, as there were formerly slavery and tyranny in Rome.

These principles account for the great liberty of the press in these kingdoms, beyond what is indulged in any other government. It is apprehended, that arbitrary power would steal in upon us, were we not careful to prevent its progress, and were there not an easy method of conveying the alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other. The spirit of the people must frequently be roused, in order to curb the ambition of the court; and the dread of rousing this spirit must be employed to prevent



that ambition. Nothing so effectual to this purpose as the liberty of the press; by which all the learning, wit, and genius of the nation, may be employed on the side of freedom, and every one be animated to its defence. As long, therefore, as the republican part of our government can maintain itself against the monarchical, it will naturally be careful to keep the press open, as of importance to its own preservation.

It must however be allowed, that the unbounded liberty of the press, though it be difficult, perhaps impossible, to propose a suitable remedy for it, is one of the evils attending those mixed forms of government.

## ESSAY XXV.

### OF THE PROTESTANT SUCCESSION.

I SUPPOSE, that if a member of parliament in the reign of King William or Queen Anne, while the establishment of the *Protestant Succession* was yet uncertain, were deliberating concerning the party he would choose in that important question, and weighing, with impartiality, the advantages and disadvantages on each side, I believe the following particulars would have entered into his consideration.

He would easily perceive the great advantage resulting from the restoration of the Stuart family; by which we should preserve the succession clear and undisputed, free from a pretender with such a specious title as that of blood, which, with the multitude, is always the claim the strongest and most easily comprehended. It is in vain to say, as many have done, that the question with regard to *governors*, independent of *government*, is frivolous, and little worth disputing, much less fighting about. The generality of mankind never ~~will~~ enter into these sentiments; and it is much happier, I believe, for society, that they do not, but rather continue in their natural prepossessions. How could stability be preserved in any monarchical government (which, though perhaps not the best, is, and always has been, the most common of any,) unless men had so passionate a regard for the true heir of their royal family; and even though he be weak in understanding, or infirm in years, gave him so sensible a preference above persons the most accomplished in shining talents, or celebrated for great achievements? Would not every popular leader put in his claim at every vacancy, or even without any vacancy; and the kingdom become the theatre of perpetual wars and convulsions? The condition of the Roman empire, surely, was not in this respect much to be envied; nor is that of the *Eastern* nations, who pay little regard to the titles of their sovereign, but sacrifice them,

every day, to the caprice or momentary humour of the populace or soldiery. It is but a foolish wisdom, which is so carefully displayed in undervaluing princes, and placing them on a level with the meanest of mankind. To be sure, an anatomist finds no more in the greatest monarch than in the lowest peasant or day labourer ; and a moralist may, perhaps, frequently find less. But what do all these reflections tend to ? We, all of us, still retain these prejudices in favour of birth and family ; and neither in our serious occupations, nor most careless amusements, can we ever get entirely rid of them. A tragedy that should represent the adventures of sailors, or porters, or even of private gentlemen, would presently disgust us ; but one that introduces kings and princes, acquires in our eyes an air of importance and dignity. Or should a man be able, by his superior wisdom, to get entirely above such prepossessions, he would soon, by means of the same wisdom, again bring himself down to them for the sake of society, whose welfare he would perceive to be intimately connected with them. Far from endeavouring to undeceive the people in this particular, he would cherish such sentiments of reverence to their princes, as requisite to preserve a due subordination in society. And though the lives of twenty thousand men be often sacrificed to maintain a king in possession of his throne, or preserve the right of succession undisturbed, he entertains no indignation at the loss, on pretence that every individual of these was, perhaps, in himself, as valuable as the prince he served. He considers the consequences of violating the hereditary right of kings : Consequences which may be felt for many centuries ; while the loss of several thousand men brings so little prejudice to a large kingdom, that it may not be perceived a few years after.

The advantages of the Hanover succession are of an opposite nature, and arise from this very circumstance that it violates hereditary right, and places, on the throne a prince to whom birth gave no title to that dignity. It is evident, from the history of this island, that the privileges of the people have, during near two centuries, been continually upon the increase, by the division of the churchlands, by the alienations of the barons' estates, by the progress of trade, and above all by the happiness of our situation, which, for a long time, gave us sufficient security, without any standing army or military establishment. On the contrary, public liberty has, almost in every other nation of Europe, been, during the same period, extremely on the decline ; while the people were disgusted at the hardships of the old feudal militia, and rather chose to entrust their prince with mercenary armies, which he easily turned against themselves. It was nothing extraordinary, therefore, that some of our British sovereigns mistook the nature of the constitution, at least the genius of the people ;

and as they embraced all the favourable precedents left them by their ancestors, they overlooked all those which were contrary, and which supposed a limitation in our government. They were encouraged in this mistake, by the example of all the neighbouring princes, who bearing the same title or appellation, and being adorned with the same ensigns of authority, naturally led them to claim the same powers and prerogatives. It appears from the speeches and proclamations of James I. and the whole train of that prince's actions, as well as his son's, that he regarded the English government as a simple monarchy, and never imagined that any considerable part of his subjects entertained a contrary idea. This opinion made those monarchs discover their pretensions, without preparing any force to support them; and even without reserve or disguise, which are always employed by those who enter upon any new project, or endeavour to innovate in any government. The flattery of the courtiers farther confirmed their prejudices; and, above all, that of the clergy, who from several passages of *Scripture*, and these wrested too, had erected a regular and avowed system of arbitrary power. The only method of destroying, at once, all these high claims and pretensions, was to depart from the true hereditary line, and choose a prince, who, being plainly a creature of the public, and receiving the crown on conditions, expressed and avowed, found his authority established on the same bottom with the privileges of the people. By electing him in the royal line, we cut off all hopes of ambitious subjects, who might, in future emergencies, disturb the government by their cabals and pretensions: By rendering the crown hereditary in his family, we avoided all the inconveniences of elective monarchy; and by excluding the lineal heir, we secured all our constitutional limitations, and rendered our government uniform and of a piece. The people cherish monarchy, because protected by it: The monarch favours liberty, because created by it: And thus every advantage is obtained by the new establishment, as far as human skill and wisdom can extend itself.

These are the separate advantages of fixing the succession, either in the house of Stuart, or in that of Hanover. There are also disadvantages in each establishment, which an impartial patriot would ponder and examine, in order to form a just judgment upon the whole.

The disadvantages of the protestant succession consist in the foreign dominions which are possessed by the princes of the Hanover line, and which, it might be supposed, would engage us in the intrigues and wars of the continent, and lose us, in some measure, the inestimable advantage we possess, of being surrounded and guarded by the sea, which we command. The

disadvantages of recalling the abdicated family consist chiefly in their religion, which is more prejudicial to society than that established among us, is contrary to it, and affords no toleration, or peace, or security, to any other communion.

It appears to me, that these advantages and disadvantages are allowed on both sides; at least, by every one who is at all susceptible of argument or reasoning. No subject, however loyal, pretends to deny, that the disputed title and foreign dominions of the present royal family are a loss. Nor is there any partisan of the Stuarts but will confess, that the claim of hereditary, indefeasible right, and the Roman Catholic religion, are also disadvantages in that family. It belongs, therefore, to a philosopher alone, who is of neither party, to put all the circumstances in the scale, and assign to each of them its proper poise and influence. Such a one will readily at first acknowledge, that all political questions are infinitely complicated, and that there scarcely ever occurs in any deliberation, a choice which is either purely good, or purely ill. Consequences, mixed and varied, may be foreseen to flow from every measure: And many consequences, unforeseen, do always, in fact, result from every one. Hesitation and reserve, and suspense, are therefore the only sentiments he brings to this essay or trial. Or, if he indulges any passion, it is that of derision against the ignorant multitude, who are always clamorous and dogmatical, even in the nicest questions, of which, from want of temper, perhaps sill more than of understanding, they are altogether unfit judges.

But to say something more determinate on this head, the following reflections will, I hope, show the temper, if not the understanding, of a philosopher.

Were we to judge merely by first appearances, and by past experience, we must allow that the advantages of a parliamentary title in the house of Hanover are greater than those of an undisputed hereditary title in the house of Stuart, and that our fathers acted wisely in preferring the former to the latter. So long as the house of Stuart ruled in Great Britain, which, with some interruption, was above eighty years, the government was kept in a continual fever, by the contention between the privileges of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. If arms were dropped, the noise of disputes continued: Or if these were silenced, jealousy still corroded the heart, and threw the nation into an unnatural ferment and disorder. And while we were thus occupied in domestic disputes, a foreign power, dangerous to public liberty, erected itself in Europe, without any opposition from us, and even sometimes with our assistance.

But during these last sixty years, when a parliamentary establishment has taken place; whatever factions may have prevailed,

either among the people or in public assemblies, the whole force of our constitution has always fallen to one side, and an uninterrupted harmony has been preserved between our princes and our parliaments. Public liberty, with internal peace and order, has flourished almost without interruption : Trade, and manufactures, and agriculture, have increased : The arts, and sciences, and philosophy, have been cultivated. Even religious parties have been necessitated to lay aside their mutual rancour ; and the glory of the nation has spread itself all over Europe ; derived equally from our progress in the arts of peace, and from valour and success in war. So long and so glorious a period no nation almost can boast of : Nor is there another instance in the whole history of mankind, that so many millions of people have, during such a space of time, been held together, in a manner so free, so rational, and so suitable to the dignity of human nature.

But though this recent experience seems clearly to decide in favour of the present establishment, there are some circumstances to be thrown into the other scale ; and it is dangerous to regulate our judgment by one event or example.

We have had two rebellions during the flourishing period above mentioned, besides plots and conspiracies without number. And if none of these have produced any very fatal event, we may ascribe our escape chiefly to the narrow genius of those princes who disputed our establishment ; and we may esteem ourselves so far fortunate. But the claims of the banished family, I fear, are not yet antiquated ; and who can foretell, that their future attempts will produce no greater disorder ?

The disputes between privilege and prerogative may easily be composed by laws, and votes, and conferences, and concessions, where there is tolerable temper or prudence on both sides, or on either side. Among contending titles, the question can only be determined by the sword, and by devastation, and by civil war.

A prince, who fills the throne with a disputed title, dares not arm his subjects ; the only method of securing a people fully, both against domestic oppression and foreign conquest.

Notwithstanding our riches and renown, what a critical escape did we make, by the late peace, from dangers, which were owing not so much to bad conduct and ill success in war, as to the pernicious practice of mortgaging our finances, and the still more pernicious maxim of never paying off our encumbrances ? Such fatal measures would not probably have been embraced, had it not been to secure a precarious establishment.

But to convince us, that an hereditary title is to be embraced rather than a parliamentary one, which is not supported by any other views or motives ; a man needs only transport himself back

to the era of the Restoration, and suppose that he had had a seat in that parliament which recalled the royal family, and put a period to the greatest disorders that ever arose from the opposite pretensions of prince and people. What would have been thought of one that had proposed at that time, to set aside Charles II. and settle the crown on the Duke of York or Gloucester, merely in order to exclude all high claims, like those of their father and grandfather? Would not such a one have been regarded as an extravagant projector, who loved dangerous remedies, and could tamper and play with a government and national constitution, like a quack with a sickly patient.

In reality, the reason assigned by the nation for excluding the race of Stuart, and so many other branches of the royal family, is not on account of their hereditary title, (a reason which would, to vulgar apprehensions, have appeared altogether absurd), but on account of their religion; which leads us to compare the disadvantages above-mentioned in each establishment.

I confess that, considering the matter in general, it were much to be wished that our prince had no foreign dominions, and could confine all his attention to the government of this island. For not to mention some real inconveniences that may result from territories on the continent, they afford such a handle for calumny and defamation, as is greedily seized by the people, always disposed to think ill of their superiors. It must, however, be acknowledged, that Hanover is, perhaps, the spot of ground in Europe the least inconvenient for a King of England. It lies in the heart of Germany, at a distance from the great powers, which are our natural rivals: It is protected by the laws of the empire, as well as by the arms of its own sovereign: And it serves only to connect us more closely with the house of Austria, our natural ally.

\* The religious persuasion of the house of Stuart is an inconvenience of a much deeper die, and would threaten us with much more dismal consequences. The Roman Catholic religion, with its train of priests and friars, is more expensive than ours; even though unaccompanied with its natural attendants of inquisitors, and stakes, and gibbets, it is less tolerating: And not content with dividing the sacerdotal from the regal office,\* (which must be injurious to any state), it bestows the former on a foreigner, who has always a separate interest from that of the public, and may often have an opposite one.

\* Christianity does not recognise the union of these offices. The King may indeed rule the Church in temporals, but he has no sacerdotal character. Neither the Episcopal Church of England, nor the Presbyterian Church of Scotland regards the Sovereign as holding any priestly office. The Headship of the Church, allowed by the Anglican communion to the Queen, appertains only to its canonical government: She neither administers the word, nor the sacraments, nor discharges any distinctive sacerdotal duty. The Roman Church will not allow even the temporal government to Princes, but claims it for the Pope as the Head, temporal and spiritual, on Earth, of the Church. Ed.

But were this religion ever so advantageous to society, it is contrary to that which is established among us, and which is likely to keep possession, for a long time, of the minds of the people. And though it is much to be hoped, that the progress of reason will, by degrees, abate the acrimony of opposite religions all over Europe; yet the spirit of moderation has, as, yet, made too slow advances to be entirely trusted.

Thus upon the whole, the advantages of the settlement in the family of Stuart, which frees us from a disputed title, seem to bear some proportion with those of the settlement in the family of Hanover, which frees us from the claims of prerogative; but, at the same time, its disadvantages, by placing on the throne a Roman Catholic, are greater than those of the other establishment, in settling the crown on a foreign prince. What party an impartial patriot, in the reign of K. William or Q. Anne, would have chosen amidst these opposite views, may perhaps to some appear hard to determine.

But the settlement in the house of Hanover has actually taken place. The princes of that family, without intrigue, without cabal, without solicitation on their part, have been called to mount our throne, by the united voice of the whole legislative body. They have since their accession, displayed, in all their actions, the utmost mildness, equity, and regard to the laws and constitution. Our own ministers, our own parliaments, ourselves, have governed us; and if aught ill has befallen us, we can only blame fortune or ourselves. What a reproach must we become among nations, if, disgusted with a settlement so deliberately made, and whose conditions have been so religiously observed, we should throw every thing again into confusion; and by our levity and rebellious disposition, prove ourselves totally unfit for any state but that of absolute slavery and subjection?

The greatest inconvenience, attending a disputed title, is, that it brings us in danger of civil wars and rebellions. What wise man, to avoid this inconvenience, would run directly into a civil war and rebellion? Not to mention, that so long possession, secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, in the apprehension of a great part of the nation, have begotten a title in the house of Hanover, independent of their present possession: So that now we should not, even by a revolution, obtain the end of avoiding a disputed title.

No revolution made by national forces, will ever be able, without some other great necessity, to abolish our debts and encumbrances, in which the interest of so many persons is concerned. And a revolution made by foreign forces is a conquest; a calamity with which the precarious balance of power threatens us, and which our civil dissensions are likely, above all other circumstances, to bring upon us.

## ESSAY XXVI.

## OF THE INDEPENDENCY OF PARLIAMENT.

POLITICAL writers have established it as a maxim, that, in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a *knave*, and to have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and, by means of it, make him, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition, co-operate to public good. Without this, say they, we shall in vain boast of the advantages of any constitution, and shall find, in the end, that we have no security for our liberties or possessions, except the good-will of our rulers; that is, we shall have no security at all.

It is, therefore, a just *political maxim*, that *every man must be supposed a knave*; though, at the same time, it appears somewhat strange, that a maxim should be true in *politics* which is false in *fact*. But to satisfy us on this head, we may consider, that men are generally more honest in their private than in their public capacity, and will go greater lengths to serve a party, than when their own private interest is alone concerned. Honour is a great check upon mankind: But where a considerable body of men act together, this check is in a great measure removed; since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party, for what promotes the common interest; and he soon learns to despise the clamours of adversaries. To which we may add, that every court or senate is determined by the greater number of voices; so that, if self-interest influences only the majority, (as it will always do), the whole senate follows the allurements of this separate interest, and acts as if it contained not one member who had any regard to public interest and liberty.

When there offers, therefore, to our censure and examination, any plan of government, real or imaginary, where the power is distributed among several courts, and several orders of men, we should always consider the separate interest of each court, and each order; and, if we find that by the skilful division of power, this interest must necessarily, in its operation, concur with the public, we may pronounce that government to be wise and happy. If on the contrary, separate interest be not checked, and be not directed to the public, we ought to look for nothing but faction, disorder, and tyranny from such a government. In this opinion I am justified by experience, as well as by the authority of all philosophers and politicians, both ancient and modern.

How much, therefore, would it have surprised such a genius as Cicero or Tacitus, to have been told, that in a future age, there should arise a very regular system of *mixed government*, where



the authority was so distributed, that one rank, whenever it pleased, might swallow up all the rest, and engross the whole power of the constitution. Such a government, they would say, will not be a mixed government. For so great is the natural ambition of men, that they are never satisfied with power; and if one order of men, by pursuing its own interest, can usurp upon every other order, it will certainly do so, and render itself, as far as possible, absolute and uncontrollable.

But, in this opinion, experience shews they would have been mistaken. For this is actually the case with the British constitution. The share of power, allotted by our constitution to the house of commons, is so great, that it absolutely commands all the other parts of the government. The king's legislative power is plainly no proper check to it. For though the king has a negative in framing laws, yet this, in fact, is esteemed of so little moment, that whatever is voted by the two houses, is always sure to pass into a law, and the royal assent is little better than a form. The principal weight of the crown lies in the executive power. But besides that the executive power in every government is altogether subordinate to the legislative; besides this, I say, the exercise of this power requires an immense expense, and the commons have assumed to themselves the sole right of granting money. How easy, therefore, would it be for that house to wrest from the crown all these powers, one after another; by making every grant conditional; and choosing their time so well, that their refusal of supply should only distress the government, without giving foreign powers any advantage over us? Did the house of commons depend in the same manner upon the king, and had none of the members any property but from his gift, would not he command all their resolutions, and be from that moment absolute? As to the house of lords, they are a very powerful support to the crown, so long as they are, in their turn, supported by it; but both experience and reason shew, that they have no force or authority sufficient to maintain themselves alone, without such support.

How, therefore, shall we solve this paradox? And, by what means is this member of our constitution confined within the proper limits; since, from our very constitution, it must necessarily have as much power as it demands, and can only be confined by itself? How is this consistent with our experience of human nature? I answer, that the interest of the body is here restrained by that of the individuals, and that the house of commons stretches not its power, because such an usurpation would be contrary to the interest of the majority of its members. The crown has so many offices at its disposal, that, when assisted by the honest and disinterested part of the house, it will always command the resolutions of the whole, so far, at least, as to pre-

serve the ancient constitution from danger. We may, therefore give to this influence what name we please; we may call it by the invidious appellations of *corruption* and *dependence*; but some degree and some kind of it are inseparable from the very nature of the constitution, and necessary to the preservation of our mixed government.

Instead, then, of asserting\* absolutely, that the dependence of parliament, in every degree, is an infringement of British liberty, the country-party should have made some concessions to their adversaries, and have only examined what was the proper degree of this dependence, beyond which it became dangerous to liberty. But such a moderation is not to be expected in party-men of any kind. After a concession of this nature, all declamation must be abandoned; and a calm inquiry into the proper degree of court-influence and parliamentary dependence would have been expected by the readers. And though the advantage, in such a controversy, might possibly remain to the *country-party*; yet the victory would not be so complete as they wish for, nor would a true patriot have given an entire loose to his zeal, for fear of running matters into a contrary extreme, by diminishing too† far the influence of the crown. It was, therefore, thought best to deny, that this extreme could ever be dangerous to the constitution, or that the crown could ever have too little influence over members of parliament.

All questions concerning the proper medium between extremes are difficult to be decided; both because it is not easy to find *words* proper to fix this medium, and because the good and ill, in such cases, run so gradually into each other, as even to render our *sentiments* doubtful and uncertain. But there is a peculiar difficulty in the present case, which would embarrass the most knowing and most impartial examiner. The power of the crown is always lodged in a single person, either king or minister; and as this person may have either a greater or less degree of ambition, capacity, courage, popularity, or fortune, the power, which is too great in one hand, may become too little in another. In pure republics, where the authority is distributed among several assemblies or senates, the checks and controls are more regular in their operation; because the members of such numerous assemblies may be presumed to be always nearly equal in capacity and virtue; and it is only their number, riches, or authority, which enter into consideration. But a limited monarchy admits not of any such stability; nor is it possible to assign to the crown such a determinate degree of power, as will, in every hand, form a proper counterbalance to the other parts of the constitution. This is an unavoidable disadvantage, among the many advantages, attending that species of government.

\* See Dissertation on Parties, throughout.

† See NOTE [P.]

## ESSAY XXVII.

## OF PARTIES IN GENERAL.

OF all men that distinguish themselves by memorable achievements, the first place of honour seems due to LEGISLATORS and founders of states, who transmit a system of laws and institutions to secure the peace, happiness, and liberty of future generations. The influence of useful inventions in the arts and sciences may, perhaps, extend farther than that of wise laws, whose effects are limited both in time and place; but the benefit arising from the former is not so sensible as that which results from the latter. Speculative sciences do, indeed, improve the mind, but this advantage reaches only to a few persons, who have leisure to apply themselves to them. And as to practical arts, which increase the commodities and enjoyments of life, it is well known, that men's happiness consists not so much in an abundance of these, as in the peace and security with which they possess them; and those blessings can only be derived from good government. Not to mention, that general virtue and good morals in a state, which are so requisite to happiness, can never arise from the most refined precepts of philosophy, or even the severest injunctions of religion; but must proceed entirely from the virtuous education of youth, the effect of wise laws and institutions. I must therefore presume to differ from Lord Bacon in this particular, and must regard antiquity as somewhat unjust in its distribution of honours, when it made gods of all the inventors of useful arts, such as Ceres, Bacchus, Æsculapius; and dignified legislators, such as Romulus and Theseus, only with the appellation of demigods and heroes.

As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, so much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protection to each other. And what should render the founders of parties more odious, is the difficulty of extirpating these weeds, when once they have taken root in any state. They naturally propagate themselves for many centuries, and seldom end but by the total dissolution of that government, in which they are sown. They are, besides, plants which grow most plentifully in the richest soil; and though absolute governments be not wholly free from them, it must be confessed, that they rise more easily, and propagate themselves faster in free governments, where they always infect the legislature itself,

which alone could be able, by the steady application of rewards and punishments, to eradicate them.

Factions may be divided into Personal and Real; that is, into factions, founded on personal friendship or animosity among such as compose the contending parties, and into those founded on some real difference of sentiment or interest. The reason of this distinction is obvious; though I must acknowledge, that parties are seldom found pure and unmixed, either of the one kind or the other. It is not often seen, that a government divides into factions, where there is no difference in the views of the constituent members, either real or apparent, trivial or material: And in those factions, which are founded on the most real and most material difference, there is always observed a great deal of personal animosity or affection. But notwithstanding this mixture, a party may be denominated either personal or real, according to that principle which is predominant, and is found to have the greatest influence.

Personal factions arise most easily in small republics. Every domestic quarrel, there, becomes an affair of state. Love, vanity, emulation, any passion, as well as ambition and resentment, begets public division. The NERI and BIANCHI of Florence, the FREGOSI and ADORNI of Genoa, the COLONNESI and ORSINI of modern Rome, were parties of this kind.

Men have such a propensity to divide into personal factions, that the smallest appearance of real difference will produce them. What can be imagined more trivial than the difference between one colour of livery and another, in horse-races? Yet this difference begat two most inveterate factions in the Greek empire, the PRASINI and VENETI, who never suspended their animosities till they ruined that unhappy government.

We find in the Roman history a remarkable dissension between two tribes, the POLLIA and PAPIRIA, which continued for the space of near three hundred years, and discovered itself in their suffrages at every election of magistrates\*. This faction was the more remarkable, as it could continue for so long a tract of time; even though it did not spread itself, nor draw any of the other tribes into a share of the quarrel. If mankind had not a strong propensity to such divisions, the indifference of the

\* As this fact has not been much observed by antiquaries or politicians, I shall deliver it in the words of the Roman historian. "Populus Tusculanus cum conjugibus no liberis Romam venit: Ea multitudo veste mutata, et specie reorum, tribus circuit, genibus se omnium advolvens. Plus itaque misericordia ad pœnæ veniam impetrandam, quam causa ad crimen purgandum valuit. Tribus omnes, præter Polliam, antiquarunt legem. Polliæ sententia fuit, puberes verberatos necari; liberos, conjugesque sub corona lege belli venire: Memoriamque ejus iræ. Tusculanis in pœnæ tam atrocis auctores, mansisse ad patrum statum constat, nec quemquam ferro ex Pollia tribu candidatum Papiam ferro solitum." T. Livii, lib. 8. The CASTELANI and NICOLLOTTI are two mobbish factions in Venice, who frequently box together, and then lay aside their quarrels presently.

rest of the community must have suppressed this foolish animosity, that had not any aliment of new benefits and injuries, of general sympathy and antipathy, which never fail to take place, when the whole state is rent into two equal factions.

Nothing is more usual than to see parties, which have begun upon a real difference, continue even after that difference is lost. When men are once enlisted on opposite sides, they contract an affection to the persons with whom they are united, and an animosity against their antagonists: And these passions they often transmit to their posterity. The real difference between Guelf and Ghibbelline was long lost in Italy, before these factions were extinguished. The Guelfs adhered to the pope, the Ghibbellines to the emperor; yet the family of Sforza, who were in alliance with the emperor, though they were Guelfs, being expelled Milan by the king\* of France, assisted by Jacomo Trivulzio, and the Ghibbellines, the pope concurred with the latter, and they formed leagues with the pope against the emperor.

The civil wars which arose some few years ago in Morocco, between the *blacks* and *whites*, merely on account of their complexion, are founded on a pleasant difference. We laugh at them; but I believe, were things rightly examined, we afford much more occasion of ridicule to the Moors. For, what are all the wars of religion, which have prevailed in this polite and knowing part of the world? They are certainly more absurd than the Moorish civil wars. The difference of complexion is a sensible and a real difference: But the controversy about an article of faith, which is utterly absurd and unintelligible, is not a difference in sentiment, but in a few phrases and expressions, which one party accepts of, without understanding them; and the other refuses in the same manner.†

*Real* factions may be divided into those from *interest*, from *principle*, and from *affection*. Of all factions, the first are the most reasonable, and most excusable. Where two orders of men, such as the nobles and people, have a distinct authority in a government, not very accurately balanced and modelled, they naturally follow a distinct interest; nor can we reasonably expect a different conduct, considering that degree of selfishness.

\* Lewis XII.

† "It is well known," observes Hume elsewhere "that in all questions submitted to the understanding, prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the Intellectual faculties." The truth of this remark, he most strikingly exemplifies himself. The absurdity and unintelligibleness proddicated of Christian Articles of Faith, is simply a *begging of the question*. What appears absurd and unintelligible, through the dark mists of prejudice, might nevertheless be in itself perfectly clear and reasonable, and especially to the eye of faith. It is true that, at times, a controversy on an article of Faith, as on other matters, turns upon a misapprehension of each other's meaning by the contending parties; but this is not because the Article is absurd and unintelligible, but because human passions so carry them away, that they do not stop to ascertain whether there is any but a nominal difference between them. — Ed.

implanted in human nature. It requires great skill in a legislator to prevent such parties; and many philosophers are of opinion, that this secret, like the *grand elixir*, or *perpetual motion*, may amuse men in theory, but can never possibly be reduced to practice. In despotic governments, indeed, factions often do not appear; but they are not the less real; or rather, they are more real and more pernicious, upon that very account. The distinct orders of men, nobles and people, soldiers and merchants, have all a distinct interest; but the more powerful oppresses the weaker with impunity, and without resistance; which begets a seeming tranquillity in such governments.

There has been an attempt in England to divide the *landed* and *trading* part of the nation; but without success. The interests of these two bodies are not really distinct, and never will be so, till our public debts increase to such a degree, as to become altogether oppressive and intolerable.

Parties from *principle*, especially abstract speculative principle, are known only to modern times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary and unaccountable *phenomenon* that has yet appeared in human affairs. Where different principles beget a contrariety of conduct, which is the case with all different political principles, the matter may be more easily explained. A man, who esteems the true right of government to lie in one man, or one family, cannot easily agree with his fellow-citizen, who thinks that another man or family is possessed of this right. Each naturally wishes that right may take place, according to his own notions of it. But where the difference of principle is attended with no contrariety of action, but every one may follow his own way, without interfering with his neighbour, as happens in all religious controversies; what madness, what fury, can beget such an unhappy and such fatal divisions?\*

Two men travelling on the highway, the one east, the other, west, can easily pass each other, if the way be broad enough: but two men, reasoning upon opposite principles of religion, cannot so easily pass, without shocking; though one should think, that the way were also, in that case, sufficiently broad, and that each might proceed, without interruption, in his own course. But such is the nature of the human mind, that it always lays hold on every mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully fortified by an unanimity of sentiments, so it is shocked and dis-

\* The assertion is incorrect that difference of Religious Principles is attended with no contrariety of action. Religious Principles must call forth corresponding Religious Actions, quite as much as do Political Principles: And when the difference is in *principles*, the same excuse that is offered for the political partizan, will plead for the religious one, and to the same extent,—no further. It should not be lost sight of, that in every age and country, the Institutions of Society are as intimately connected with Religion as with Politics. Hume is forever confounding *religious principles* with *speculative notions*.—Ed.

turbed by any contrariety. Hence the eagerness which most people discover in a dispute; and hence their impatience of opposition, even in the most speculative and indifferent opinions.\*

This principle, however frivolous it may appear, seems to have been the origin of all religious wars and divisions. But as this principle is universal in human nature, its effects would not have been confined to one age, and to one sect of religion, did it not there concur with other more accidental causes, which raise it to such a height, as to produce the greatest misery and devastation. Most religions of the ancient world arose in the unknown ages of government, when men were as yet barbarous and uninstructed, and the prince, as well as peasant, was disposed to receive, with implicit faith, every pious tale or fiction, which was offered him. The magistrate embraced the religion of the people, and, entering cordially into the care of sacred matters, naturally acquired an authority in them, and united the ecclesiastical with the civil power. But the *Christian* religion arising, while principles directly opposite to it were firmly established in the polite part of the world, who despised the nation, that first broached this novelty; no wonder, that, in such circumstances, it was but little countenanced by the civil magistrate, and that the priesthood was allowed to engross all the authority in the new sect. So bad a use did they make of this power, even in those early times, that the primitive persecutions may, perhaps, *in part*,† be ascribed to the violence instilled by them into their followers.‡

And the same principles of priestly government continuing, after Christianity became the established religion; they have engendered a spirit of persecution, which has ever since been the poison of human society, and the source of the most inveterate factions in every government. Such divisions, therefore, on the part of the people, may justly be esteemed factions of *principle*; but, on the part of the priests, who are the prime movers, they are really factions of *interest*.

\* The reader will observe that the cause of the *Odium Theologicum* is likewise the cause of all party zeal.—Ed.

† It is true there were concurrent causes that inflamed party feeling against the early Christians, and lighted the fires of persecution; but it is uncandid to pretend to trace these to the influence and power of the priesthood. It was the opposition of the Civil Magistrate to Christianity, and not any opposition to him as a Civil Magistrate; and the zeal of the polite world for their own religious sentiments, inflamed into the fiercest hatred by their uncompromising condemnation by the new religion, that caused the pagan persecutions. To attribute violence to the ancient christian is to falsify history. The christian priest, invariably the first victim of persecution, did indeed infuse into the minds of his flock, heroic *firmness* and *constancy*, but assuredly not *violence*. The priest, it should be remembered, had no political power or influence whatever in these days. Christians, resolute in rendering to God the things that are God's, were quite as forward to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. To the neglect of this just distinction between civil and religious obedience, this wholesome separation between Church and State, is, in a great measure, to be attributed the religious hatreds and persecutions of the middle age.—Ed.

‡ See NOTE [Q].

There is another cause (beside the authority of the priests, and the separation of the ecclesiastical and civil powers) which has contributed to render Christendom the scene of religious wars and divisions. Religions that arise in ages totally ignorant and barbarous, consist mostly of traditional tales and fictions, which may be different in every sect, without being contrary to each other; and even when they are contrary, every one adheres to the tradition of his own sect, without much reasoning or disputation. But as philosophy was widely spread over the world at the time when Christianity arose, the teachers of the new sect were obliged to form a system of speculative opinions; to divide, with some accuracy their articles of faith; and to explain, comment, confute, and defend, with all the subtlety of argument and science. Hence naturally arose keenness in dispute, when the Christian religion came to be split into new divisions and heresies: And this keenness assisted the priests in their policy, of begetting a mutual hatred and antipathy among their deluded followers. Sects of philosophy, in the ancient world, were more zealous than parties of religion; but, in modern times, parties of religion are more furious and enraged than the most cruel factions that ever arose from interest and ambition.\*

I have mentioned parties from *affection* as a kind of *real* parties, beside those from *interest* and principle. By parties, from affection, I understand those which are founded on the different attachments of men towards particular families and persons, whom they desire to rule over them. These factions are often very violent; though, I must own, it may seem unaccountable, that men should attach themselves so strongly to persons, with whom they are nowise acquainted, whom perhaps they never saw, and from whom they never received, nor can ever hope for any favour. Yet this we often find to be the case, and even with men who, on other occasions, discover no great generosity of spirit, nor are found to be easily transported by friendship beyond their own interest. We are apt to think the relation between us and our sovereign very close and intimate. The splendour of majesty and power bestows an importance on the fortunes even of a single person. And when a man's good nature does not give him this imaginary interest, his ill nature will, from spite and opposition to persons whose sentiments are different from his own.

\* It is one of the most pernicious tricks of sophistry to assume a point as true, and build conclusions on it, as if it were a matter beyond dispute: Christianity is not a system of speculative opinions; nor is it formed on philosophical subtleties, though its doctrines have been shown to be consistent with sound philosophy. The fierceness of religious disputes is sufficiently accounted for above, by Hume himself:—"Such is the nature of the human mind that it always lays hold on every mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully fortified by an unanimity of sentiments, so it is shocked and disturbed by any contrariety." The effect on the mind of a difference of opinion is, of course, in proportion to the nature of our convictions; hence it is that a violation of religious convictions produces such terrible consequences.—Ed.



## ESSAY XXVIII.

## OF THE PARTIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WERE the British government proposed as a subject of speculation, one would immediately perceive in it a source of division and party, which it would be almost impossible for it, under any administration, to avoid. The just balance between the republican and monarchical part of our constitution is really, in itself, so extremely delicate and uncertain, that, when joined to men's passions and prejudices, it is impossible but different opinions must arise concerning it, even among persons of the best understanding. Those of mild tempers, who love peace and order, and detest sedition and civil wars, will always entertain more favourable sentiments of monarchy than men of bold and generous spirits, who are passionate lovers of liberty, and think no evil comparable to subjection and slavery. And though all reasonable men agree in general to preserve our mixed government; yet, when they come to particulars, some will incline to trust greater powers to the crown, to bestow on it more influence, and to guard against its encroachments with less caution, than others who are terrified at the most distant approaches of tyranny and despotic power. Thus are there parties of PRINCIPLE involved in the very nature of our constitution, which may properly enough be denominated those of COURT and COUNTRY. The strength and violence of each of these parties will much depend upon the particular administration. And administration may be so bad, as to throw a great majority into the opposition; as a good administration will reconcile to the court many of the most passionate lovers of liberty. But however the nation may fluctuate between them, the parties themselves will always subsist, so long as we are governed by a limited monarchy.

But, besides this difference of *Principle*, those parties are very much fomented by a difference of INTEREST, without which they could scarcely ever be dangerous or violent. The crown will naturally bestow all trust and power upon those, whose principles, real or pretended, are most favourable to monarchical government; and this temptation will naturally engage them to go greater lengths than their principles would otherwise carry them. Their antagonists, who are disappointed in their ambitious aims, throw themselves into the party whose sentiments incline them to be most jealous of royal power, and naturally carry those sentiments to a greater height than sound politics will justify. This *Court* and *Country* which are the genuine offspring of the British government, are a kind of mixed parties, and are

influenced both by principle and by interest. The heads of the factions are commonly most governed by the latter motive; the inferior members of them by the former.

As to ecclesiastical parties, we may observe, that, in all ages of the world, priests have been enemies to liberty; and it is certain, that this steady conduct of theirs must have been founded on fixed reasons of interest and ambition. Liberty of thinking, and of expressing our thoughts, is always fatal to priestly power, and to those pious frauds on which it is commonly founded; and, by an infallible connection, which prevails among all kinds of liberty, this privilege can never be enjoyed, at least has never yet been enjoyed, but in a free government. Hence it must happen, in such a constitution as that of Great Britain, that the established clergy, while things are in their natural situation, will always be of the *Court*-party; as, on the contrary, dissenters of all kinds will be of the *Country*-party; since they can never hope for that toleration, which they stand in need of, but by means of our free government. All princes that have aimed at despotic power, have known of what importance it was to gain the established clergy; as the clergy, on their part, have shewn a great facility in entering into the views of such princes\*. Gustavus Vasa was, perhaps, the only ambitious monarch that ever depressed the church, at the same time that he discouraged liberty. But the exorbitant power of the bishops in Sweden, who, at that time, over-topped the crown itself, together with their attachment to a foreign family, was the reason of his embracing such an unusual system of politics.

This observation, concerning the propensity of priests to the government of a single person, is not true with regard to one sect only. The *Presbyterian* and *Calvinistic* clergy in Holland were professed friends to the family of Orange; as the *Arminians*, who were esteemed heretics, were of the Louvestein faction, and zealous for liberty. But if a prince have the choice of both, it is easy to see that he will prefer the episcopal to the presbyterian form of government; both because of the greater affinity between monarchy and episcopacy, and because of the facility which he will find, in such a government, of ruling the clergy by means of their ecclesiastical superiors.†

If we consider the first rise of parties in England, during the great rebellion, we shall observe that it was conformable to this general theory, and that the species of government gave birth to

\* *Judei sibi ipsi reges imposuere; qui mobilitate vulgi expulsi, resumpta per arma dominatione, fugas civium, urbium everstiones, fratrum, conjugum, parentum neces aliisque solita regibus ausi, superstitionem fovebant; quia honor sacerdotii, firmamentum potentie, assumebatur.* TACIT. Hist. lib. v.

† *Populi inperium juxta libertatem: paucorum dominatio regis libidini propior est.* TACIT. Ann. lib. vi.

them by a regular and infallible operation. The English constitution, before that period, had lain in a kind of confusion; yet so as that the subjects possessed many noble privileges, which, though not exactly bounded and secured by law, were universally deemed, from long possession, to belong to them as their birth-right. An ambitious, or rather a misguided prince arose, who deemed all these privileges to be concessions of his predecessors, revocable at pleasure; and, in prosecution of this principle, he openly acted in violation of liberty during the course of several years. Necessity, at last, constrained him to call a parliament: The spirit of liberty arose and spread itself: The prince, being without any support, was obliged to grant every thing required of him: And his enemies, jealous and implacable, set no bounds to their pretensions. Here, then, began those contests, in which it was no wonder that men of that age were divided into different parties; since, even at this day, the impartial are at a loss to decide concerning the justice of the quarrel. The pretensions of the parliament, if yielded to, broke the balance of the constitution, by rendering the government almost entirely republican. If not yielded to, the nation was, perhaps, still in danger of absolute power, from the settled principles and inveterate habits of that King, which had plainly appeared in every concession that he had been constrained to make to his people. In this question, so delicate and uncertain, men naturally fell to the side which was most conformable to their usual principles; and the more passionate favourers of monarchy declared for the king, as the zealous friends of liberty sided with the parliament. The hopes of success being nearly equal on both sides, *interest* had no general influence in this contest: So that ROUND-HEAD and CAVALIER were merely parties of principle; neither of which disowned either monarchy or liberty; but the former party inclined most to the republican part of our government, the latter to the monarchical. In this respect, they may be considered as court and country party, inflamed into a civil war, by an unhappy concurrence of circumstances, and by the turbulent spirit of the age. The commonwealth's men, and the partisans of absolute power, lay concealed in both parties, and formed but an inconsiderable part of them.

The clergy had concurred with the king's arbitrary designs; and, in return, were allowed to persecute their adversaries, whom they called heretics and schismatics. The established clergy were episcopal; the non-conformists presbyterian: So that all things concurred to throw the former, without reserve, into the king's party, and the latter into that of the parliament.

Every one knows the event of this quarrel; fatal to the king first, to the parliament afterwards. After many confusions and

revolutions, the royal family was at last restored, and the ancient government re-established. Charles II. was not made wiser by the example of his father, but prosecuted the same measures, though, at first, with more secrecy and caution. New parties arose, under the appellation of *Whig* and *Tory*, which have continued ever since to confound and distract our government. To determine the nature of these parties is perhaps one of the most difficult problems that can be met with, and is a proof that history may contain questions as uncertain as any to be found in the most abstract sciences. We have seen the conduct of the two parties, during the course of seventy years, in a vast variety of circumstances, possessed of power, and deprived of it, during peace, and during war: Persons, who profess themselves of one side or other, we meet with every hour, in company, in our pleasures, in our serious occupations: We ourselves are constrained, in a manner, to take party; and living in a country of the highest liberty, every one may openly declare all his sentiments and opinions: Yet are we at a loss to tell the nature, pretensions, and principles, of the different factions.

When we compare the parties of WHIG and TORY with those of ROUND-HEAD and CAVALIER, the most obvious difference that appears between them consists in the principles of *passive obedience*, and *indefeasible right*, which were but little heard of among the Cavaliers, but became the universal doctrine, and were esteemed the true characteristic of a Tory. Were these principles pushed into their most obvious consequences, they imply a formal renunciation of all our liberties, and an avowal of absolute monarchy; since nothing can be a greater absurdity than a limited power, which must not be resisted, even when it exceeds its limitations. But, as the most rational principles are often but a weak counterpoise to passion, it is no wonder that these absurd principles were found too weak for that effect. The Tories, as men, were enemies to oppression; and also as Englishmen, they were enemies to arbitrary power. Their zeal for liberty was, perhaps, less fervent than that of their antagonists, but was sufficient to make them forget all their general principles, when they saw themselves openly threatened with a subversion of the ancient government. From these sentiments arose the *revolution*; an event of mighty consequence, and the firmest foundation of British liberty. The conduct of the Tories during that event, and after it, will afford us a true insight into the nature of that party.

In the *first* place, they appear to have had the genuine sentiments of Britons in their affection for liberty, and in their determined resolution not to sacrifice it to any abstract principle whatsoever, or to any imaginary rights of princes. This part of

their character might justly have been doubted of before the *revolution*, from the obvious tendency of their avowed principles, and from their compliances with a court, which seemed to make little secret of its arbitrary designs. The *revolution* shewed them to have been, in this respect, nothing but a genuine *court-party*, such as might be expected in a British government; that is, *Lovers of liberty, but greater lovers of monarchy*. It must, however, be confessed, that they carried their monarchical principles farther even in practice, but more so in theory, than was, in any degree, consistent with a limited government.

*Secondly*, Neither their principles nor affections concurred, entirely, with the settlement made at the *Revolution*, or with that which has since taken place. This part of their character may seem opposite to the former; since any other settlement, in those circumstances of the nation, must probably have been dangerous, if not fatal to liberty. But the heart of man is made to reconcile contradictions; and this contradiction is not greater than that between *passive obedience*, and the *resistance* employed at the *Revolution*. A *TORY*, therefore, since the *Revolution*, may be defined in a few words, to be a *lover of monarchy, though without abandoning liberty; and a partisan of the family of Stuart*: As a *WHIG* may be defined to be a *lover of liberty, though without renouncing monarchy; and a friend to the settlement in the Protestant line*.

These different views, with regard to the settlement of the crown, were incidental, but natural additions to the principles of the *court* and *country* parties, which are the genuine divisions in the British government. A passionate lover of monarchy is apt to be displeased at any change of the succession; as savouring too much of a commonwealth; A passionate lover of liberty is apt to think that every part of the government ought to be subordinate to the interests of liberty.

Some, who will not venture to assert, that the *real* difference between Whig and Tory was lost at the *Revolution*, seem inclined to think, that the difference is now abolished; and that affairs are so far returned to their natural state, that there are, at present, no other parties among us but *court* and *country*; that is, men who, by interest or principle, are attached either to monarchy or liberty. The Tories have been so long obliged to talk in the republican style, that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments, as well as language of their adversaries. There are, however, very considerable remains of that party in England, with all their old prejudices; and a proof that *court* and *country* are not our only parties, is, that almost all the dissenters side with the *court*, and the lower clergy, at least of the church of England, with the

opposition. This may convince us, that some bias still hangs upon our constitution, some extrinsic weight, which turns it from its natural course, and causes a confusion in our parties\*.

## ESSAY XXIX.

### OF THE COALITION OF PARTIES.

To abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable in a free government. The only dangerous parties are such as entertain opposite views with regard to the essentials of government, the succession of the crown, or the more considerable privileges belonging to the several members of the constitution; where there is no room for any compromise or accommodation, and where the controversy may appear so momentous as to justify even an opposition by arms to the pretensions of antagonists. Of this nature was the animosity continued for above a century past, between the parties in England; an animosity which broke out sometimes into civil war, which occasioned violent revolutions, and which continually endangered the peace and tranquillity of the nation. But as there have appeared of late the strongest symptoms of an universal desire to abolish these party distinctions; this tendency to a coalition affords the most agreeable prospect of future happiness, and ought to be carefully cherished and promoted by every lover of his country.

There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end, than to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise or blame which we bestow on either side. The two former essays, concerning the *original contract* and *passive obedience*, are calculated for this purpose with regard to the *philosophical* and *practical* controversies between the parties; and tend to show that neither side are in these respects so fully supported by reason as they endeavour to flatter themselves. We shall proceed to exercise the same moderation with regard to the *historical* disputes between the parties, by proving that each of them was justified by plausible topics; that there was on both sides wise men, who meant well to their country; and that the past animosity between the factions had no better foundation than narrow prejudice or interested passion.

\* Some of the opinions delivered in these Essays, with regard to the public transactions in the last century, the Author, on more accurate examination, found reason to retract in his *History of Great Britain*. And as he would not enslave himself to the systems of either party, neither would he fetter his judgment by his own pre-conceived opinions and principles; nor is he ashamed to acknowledge his mistakes. These mistakes were indeed, at that time, almost universal in this kingdom.

The popular party, who afterwards acquired the name of Whigs, might justify, by very specious arguments, that opposition to the crown, from which our present free constitution is derived. Though obliged to acknowledge, that precedents in favour of prerogative had uniformly taken place during many reigns before Charles the First, they thought, that there was no reason for submitting any longer to so dangerous an authority. Such might have been their reasoning: As the rights of mankind are for ever to be deemed sacred, no prescription of tyranny or arbitrary power can have authority sufficient to abolish them. Liberty is a blessing so inestimable, that, wherever there appears any probability of recovering it, a nation may willingly run many hazards, and ought not even to repine at the greatest effusion of blood or dissipation of treasure. All human institutions, and none more than government, are in continual fluctuation. Kings are sure to embrace every opportunity of extending their prerogatives: And if favourable incidents be not also laid hold of for extending and securing the privileges of the people, an universal despotism must for ever prevail amongst mankind. The example of all the neighbouring nations proves, that it is no longer safe to entrust with the crown the same high prerogatives which had formerly been exercised during rude and simple ages. And though the example of many late reigns may be pleaded in favour of a power in the prince somewhat arbitrary, more remote reigns afford instances of stricter limitations imposed on the crown; and those pretensions of the parliament now branded with the title of innovations, are only a recovery of the just rights of the people.

These views, far from being odious, are surely large, and generous, and noble: To their prevalence and success the kingdom owes its liberty; perhaps its learning, its industry, commerce, and naval power: By them chiefly the English name is distinguished among the society of nations, and aspires to a rivalry with that of the freest and most illustrious commonwealths of antiquity. But as all these mighty consequences could not reasonably be foreseen at the time when the contest began, the royalists of that age wanted not specious arguments on their side, by which they could justify their defence of the then established prerogatives of the prince. We shall state the question, as it might have appeared to them at the assembling of that parliament, which, by its violent encroachments on the crown, began the civil wars.

The only rule of government, they might have said, known and acknowledged among men, is use and practice: Reason is so uncertain a guide, that it will always be exposed to doubt and controversy: Could it ever render itself prevalent over the people, men had always retained it as their sole rule of conduct: They had still continued in the primitive unconnected state of nature, without submitting to political government, whose sole basis is

not pure reason, but authority and precedent. Dissolve these ties, you break all the bonds of civil society, and leave every man at liberty to consult his private interest, by those expedients which his appetite, disguised under the appearance of reason, shall dictate to him. The spirit of innovation is in itself pernicious, however favourable its particular object may sometimes appear; a truth so obvious, that the popular party themselves are sensible of it, and therefore cover their encroachments on the crown, by the plausible pretence of their recovering the ancient liberties of the people,

But the present prerogatives of the crown, allowing all the suppositions of that party, have been incontestably established ever since the accession of the House of Tudor; a period which, as it now comprehends a hundred and sixty years, may be allowed sufficient to give stability to any constitution. Would it not have appeared ridiculous, in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, to have talked of the republican constitution as the rule of government; or to have supposed, that the former rights of the senate, and consuls and tribunes, were still subsisting.

But the present claims of the English monarchs are much more favourable than those of the Roman emperors during that age. The authority of Augustus was a plain usurpation, grounded only on military violence, and forms such an epoch in the Roman history as is obvious to every reader. But if Henry VII. really, as some pretend, enlarged the power of the crown, it was only by insensible acquisitions, which escaped the apprehension of the people, and have scarcely been remarked even by historians and politicians. The new government, if it deserves the epithet, is an imperceptible transition from the former; is entirely engrafted on it; derives its title fully from that root; and is to be considered only as one of those gradual revolutions, to which human affairs, in every nation, will be for ever subject.

The house of Tudor, and after them that of Stuart, exercised no prerogatives but what had been claimed and exercised by the Plantagenets. Not a single branch of their authority can be said to be an innovation. The only difference is, that perhaps former kings exerted these powers only by intervals, and were not able, by reason of the opposition of their barons, to render them so steady a rule of administration. But the sole inference from this fact is, that those ancient times were more turbulent and seditious; and that royal authority, the constitution, and the laws, have happily of late gained the ascendant.

Under what pretence can the popular party now speak of recovering the ancient constitution? The former control over the kings was not placed in the commons, but in the barons: The people had no authority, and even little or no liberty; till the



crown, by suppressing these factious tyrants, enforced the execution of the laws, and obliged all the subjects equally to respect each other's rights, privileges, and properties. If we must return to the ancient barbarous and feudal constitution, let those gentlemen, who now behave themselves with so much insolence to their sovereign, set the first example. Let them make court to be admitted as retainers to a neighbouring baron; and by submitting to slavery under him, acquire some protection to themselves; together with the power of exercising rapine and oppression over their inferior slaves and villains. This was the condition of the commons among their remote ancestors.

But how far back must we go, in having recourse to ancient constitutions and governments? There was a constitution still more ancient than that to which these innovators affect so much to appeal. During that period there was no *Magna Charta*: The barons themselves possessed few regular, stated privileges; and the house of commons probably had not an existence.

It is ridiculous to hear the Commons, while they are assuming, by usurpation, the whole power of government, talk of reviving the ancient institutions. Is it not known, that, though representatives received wages from their constituents; to be a member of the lower house was always considered as a burden, and an exemption from it as a privilege? Will they persuade us, that power, which of all human acquisitions, is the most coveted, and in comparison of which, even reputation, and pleasure, and riches, are slighted, could ever be regarded as a burden by any man?

The property acquired of late by the commons, it is said, entitles them to more power than their ancestors enjoyed. But to what is this increase of their property owing, but to an increase of their liberty and their security? Let them therefore acknowledge, that their ancestors, while the crown was restrained by the seditious barons, really enjoyed less liberty than they themselves have attained, after the sovereign acquired the ascendant: And let them enjoy that liberty with moderation; and not forfeit it by new exorbitant claims, and by rendering it a pretence for endless innovations.

The true rule of government is the present established practice of the age. That has most authority, because it is recent: It is also best known, for the same reason. Who has assured those tribunes, that the Plantagenets did not exercise as high acts of authority as the Tudors? Historians, they say, do not mention them. But historians are also silent with regard to the chief exertions of prerogative by the Tudors. Where any power or prerogative is fully and undoubtedly established, the exercise of it passes for a thing of course, and readily escapes the notice of history and annals. Had we no other monuments of Elizabeth's

reign, than what are preserved even by Camden, the most copious, judicious, and exact of our historians, we should be entirely ignorant of the most important maxims of her government.

Was not the present monarchical government, in its full extent authorised by lawyers, recommended by divines, acknowledged by politicians, acquiesced in, nay passionately cherished, by the people in general; and all this during a period of at least a hundred and sixty years, and, till of late, without the smallest murmur or controversy? This general consent, surely, during so long a time, must be sufficient to render a constitution legal and valid. If the origin of all power be derived, as is pretended, from the people, here is their consent in the fullest and most ample terms that can be desired or imagined.

• But the people must not pretend, because they can, by their consent, lay the foundations of government, that therefore they are to be permitted, at their pleasure, to overthrow and subvert them. There is no end of these seditious and arrogant claims. The power of the crown is now openly struck at: The nobility are also in visible peril: The gentry will soon follow: The popular leaders, who will then assume the name of gentry, will next be exposed to danger: And the people themselves, having become incapable of civil government, and lying under the restraint of no authority, must, for the sake of peace, admit, instead of their legal and mild monarchies, a succession of military and despotic tyrants.

These consequences are the more to be dreaded, as the present fury of the people, though glossed over by pretensions to civil liberty, is in reality incited by the fanaticism of religion; a principle the most blind, headstrong, and ungovernable, by which human nature can possibly be actuated. Popular rage is dreadful, from whatever motive derived: But must be attended with the most pernicious consequences, when it arises from a principle, which disclaims all control by human law, reason, or authority.

These are the arguments, which each party may make use of to justify the conduct of their predecessors during that great crisis. The event, if that can be admitted as a reason, has shown, that the arguments of the popular party were better founded; but perhaps, according to the established maxims of lawyers and politicians, the views of the royalists ought, before hand, to have appeared more solid, more safe, and more legal. But this is certain, that the greater moderation we now employ in representing past events, the nearer shall we be to produce a full coalition of the parties, and an entire acquiescence in our present establishment. Moderation is of advantage to every establishment: Nothing but zeal can overturn a settled power; and an over active zeal in friends is apt to beget a like spirit in antagonists. The

transition from a moderate opposition against an establishment, to an entire acquiescence in it, is easy and insensible.

There are many invincible arguments, which should induce the malcontent party to acquiesce entirely in the present settlement of the constitution. They now find, that the spirit of civil liberty, though at first connected with religious fanaticism, could purge itself from that pollution, and appear under a more genuine and engaging aspect; a friend to toleration, and encourager of all the enlarged and generous sentiments that do honor to human nature. They may observe, that the popular claims could stop at a proper period; and after retrenching the high claims of prerogative, could still maintain a due respect to monarchy, the nobility, and to all ancient institutions. Above all, they must be sensible, that the very principle, which made the strength of their party, and from which it derived its chief authority, has now deserted them, and gone over to their antagonists. The plan of liberty is settled; its happy effects are proved by experience; a long tract of time has given it stability; and whoever would attempt to overturn it, and to recal the past government or abdicated family, would, besides other more criminal imputations, be exposed, in their turn, to the reproach of faction and innovation. While they peruse the history of past events, they ought to reflect, both that those rights of the crown are long since annihilated, and that the tyranny, and violence, and oppression, to which they often gave rise, are ills, from which the established liberty of the constitution has now at last happily protected the people. These reflections will prove a better security to our freedom and privileges, than to deny, contrary to the clearest evidence of facts, that such regal powers ever had an existence. There is not a more effectual method of betraying a cause, than to lay the stress of the argument on a wrong place, and by disputing an untenable post, enure the adversaries to success and victory.

## ESSAY XXX.

### IDEA OF A PERFECT COMMONWEALTH.

It is not with forms of government, as with other artificial contrivances; where an old engine may be rejected, if we can discover another more accurate and commodious, or where trials may safely be made, even though the success be doubtful. An established government has an infinite advantage, by that very circumstance of its being established; the bulk of mankind being governed by authority, not reason, and never attributing authority to any thing that has not the recommendation of antiquity.

To tamper, therefore, in this affair, or try experiments merely

upon the credit of supposed argument and philosophy, can never be the part of a wise magistrate, who will bear a reverence to what carries the marks of age; and though he may attempt some improvements for the public good, yet will he adjust his innovations, as much as possible, to the ancient fabric; and preserve entire the chief pillars and supports of the constitution.

The mathematicians in Europe have been much divided concerning that figure of a ship which is the most commodious for sailing: and Huygens, who at last determined the controversy, is justly thought to have obliged the learned as well as commercial world; though Columbus had sailed to America, and Sir Francis Drake made the tour of the world, without any such discovery. As one form of government must be allowed more perfect than another, independent of the manners and humours of particular men; why may we not inquire what is the most perfect of all, though the common botched and inaccurate governments seem to serve the purposes of society, and though it be not so easy to establish a new system of government, as to build a vessel upon a new construction? The subject is surely the most worthy of curiosity of any the wit of man can possibly devise. And who knows, if this controversy were fixed by the universal consent of the wise and learned, but, in some future age, an opportunity might be afforded of reducing the theory to practice, either by a dissolution of some old government, or by the combination of men to form a new one, in some distant part of the world? In all cases, it must be advantageous to know what is the most perfect in the kind, that we may be able to bring any real constitution or form of government as near it as possible, by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society.

All I pretend to in the present essay is, to revive this subject of speculation; and therefore I shall deliver my sentiments in as few words as possible. A long dissertation on that head would not, I apprehend, be very acceptable to the public, who will be apt to regard such disquisitions both as useless and chimerical.

All plans of government, which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind, are plainly imaginary. Of this nature, are the *Republic* of Plato, and the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. The *Oceana* is the only valuable model of a commonwealth that has yet been offered to the public.

The chief defects of the *Oceana* seem to be these: *First*, Its rotation is inconvenient, by throwing men, of whatever abilities, by intervals, out of public employment. *Secondly*, Its *Agrarian* is impracticable. Men will soon learn the art which was practised in ancient Rome, of concealing their possessions under other people's names, till at last the abuse will become so common,

that they will throw off even the appearance of restraint. *Thirdly*, the *Oceana* provides not a sufficient security for liberty, or the redress of grievances. The senate must propose, and the people consent; by which means, the senate have not only a negative upon the people; but, what is of much greater consequence, their negative goes before the votes of the people. Were the king's negative of the same nature in the English constitution, and could he prevent any bill from coming into parliament, he would be an absolute monarch. As his negative follows the votes of the houses, it is of little consequence, such a difference is there in the manner of placing the same thing. When a popular bill has been debated in parliament, is brought to maturity, all its conveniences and inconveniences weighed and balanced; if afterwards it be presented for the royal assent, few princes will venture to reject the unanimous desire of the people. But could the king crush a disagreeable bill in embryo, (as was the case for some time in the Scottish parliament, by means of the Lords of the Articles,) the British government would have no balance, nor would grievances ever be redressed: And it is certain, that exorbitant power proceeds not in any government from new laws, so much as from neglecting to remedy the abuses which frequently rise from the old ones. A government, says Machiavel, must, often be brought back to its original principles. It appears then, that in the *Oceana*, the whole legislature may be said to rest in the senate; which Harington would own to be an inconvenient form of government, especially after the *Agrarian* is abolished.

Here is a form of government, to which I cannot, in theory, discover any considerable objection.

Let Great Britain and Ireland, or any territory of equal extent, be divided into 100 counties, and each county into 100 parishes, making in all 10,000. If the country proposed to be erected into a commonwealth be of more narrow extent, we may diminish the number of counties; but never bring them below thirty. If it be of greater extent, it were better to enlarge the parishes, or throw more parishes into a county, than increase the number of counties.

Let all the freeholders of twenty pounds a year in the county, and all the householders worth 500 pounds in the town parishes, meet annually in the parish church, and choose, by ballot, some freeholder of the county for their member, whom we shall call the *county representative*.

Let the 100 county representatives, two days after their election, meet in the county town, and choose by ballot, from their own body, ten county *magistrates*, and one senator. There are, therefore, in the whole commonwealth, 100 senators, 1100 county magistrates, and 10,000 county representatives; for we shall

bestow on all senators the authority of county magistrates, and on all county magistrates the authority of county representatives.

Let the senators meet in the capital, and be endowed with the whole executive power of the commonwealth; the power of peace and war, of giving orders to generals, admirals, and ambassadors, and, in short, all the prerogatives of a British king, except his negative.

Let the county representatives meet in their particular counties and possess the whole legislative power of the commonwealth, the greater number of counties deciding the question; and where these are equal, let the senate have the casting vote.

Every new law must first be debated in the senate; and though rejected by it, if ten senators insist and protest, it must be sent down to the counties. The senate, if they please, may join to the copy of the law their reasons for receiving or rejecting it.

Because it would be troublesome to assemble all the county representatives for every trivial law that may be requisite, the senate have their choice of sending down the law either to the county magistrates or county representatives.

The magistrates, though the law be referred to them, may, if they please, call the representatives, and submit the affair to their determination.

Whether the law be referred by the senate to the county magistrates or representatives, a copy of it, and of the senate's reasons, must be sent to every representative eight days before the day appointed for the assembling, in order to deliberate concerning it. And though the determination be, by the senate, referred to the magistrates, if five representatives of the county order the magistrates to assemble the whole court of representatives, and submit the affair to their determination, they must obey.

Either the county magistrates or representatives may give, to the senator of the county, the copy of a law to be proposed to the senate; and if five counties concur in the same order, the law, though refused by the senate, must come either to the county magistrates or representatives, as is contained in the order of the five counties.

Any twenty counties, by a vote either of their magistrates or representatives, may throw any man out of all public offices for a year. Thirty counties for three years.

The senate has a power of throwing out any member or number of members of its own body, not to be re-elected for that year. The senate cannot throw out twice in a year the senator of the same county.

The power of the old senate continues for three weeks after the annual election of the county representatives. Then all the new

senators are shut up in a conclave like the cardinals; and by an intricate ballot, such as that of Venice or Malta, they choose the following magistrates; a protector, who represents the dignity of the common-wealth, and presides in the senate; two secretaries of state: these six councils, a council of state, a council of religion and learning, a council of trade, a council of laws, a council of war, a council of the admiralty, each council consisting of five persons; together with six commissioners of the treasury, and a first commissioner. All these must be senators. The senate also names all the ambassadors to foreign courts, who may either be senators or not.

The senate may continue any or all of these, but must re-elect them every year.

The protector and two secretaries have session and suffrage in the council of state. The business of that council is all foreign politics. The council of state has session and suffrage in all the other councils.

The council of religion and learning inspects the universities and clergy. That of trade inspects every thing that may affect commerce. That of laws inspects all the abuses of law by the inferior magistrates, and examines what improvements may be made of the municipal law. That of war inspects the militia and its discipline, magazines, stores, &c. and when the republic is in war, examines into the proper orders for generals. The council of admiralty has the same power with regard to the navy, together with the nomination of the captains and all inferior officers.

None of these councils can give orders themselves, except where they receive such powers from the senate. In other cases, they must communicate every thing to the senate.

When the senate is under adjournment, any of the councils may assemble it before the day appointed for its meeting.

Besides these councils or courts, there is another called the court of *competitors*; which is thus constituted. If any candidates for the office of senator have more votes than a third of the representatives, that candidate who has most votes, next to the senator elected, becomes incapable for one year of all public offices, even of being a magistrate or representative: But he takes his seat in the court of competitors. Here then is a court which may sometimes consist of a hundred members, sometimes have no members at all; and by that means be for a year abolished.

The court of competitors has no power in the common-wealth. It has only the inspection of public accounts, and the accusing of any man before the senate. If the senate acquit him, the court of competitors may if they please, appeal to the people, either magistrates or representatives. Upon that appeal, the magistrates or representatives meet on the day appointed by the

court of competitors, and choose in each county three persons; from which number every senator is excluded. These, to the number of 300, meet in the capital, and bring the person accused to a new trial.

The court of competitors may propose any law to the senate; and if refused, may appeal to the people, that is, to the magistrates or representatives, who examine it in their counties. Every senator, who is thrown out of the senate by a vote of the court, takes his seat in the court of competitors.

The senate possesses all the judicative authority of the House of Lords, that is, all the appeals from the inferior courts. It likewise appoints the Lord Chancellor, and all the officers of the law.

Every county is a kind of republic within itself, and the representatives may make bye-laws; which have no authority till three months after they are voted. A copy of the law is sent to the senate, and to every other county. The senate, or any single county, may, at any time, annul any bye-law of another county.

The representatives have all the authority of the British justices of the peace in trials, commitments, &c.

The magistrates have the appointment of all the officers of the revenue in each county. All causes with regard to the revenue are carried ultimately by appeal before the magistrates. They pass the accounts of all the officers; but must have their own accounts examined and passed at the end of the year by the representatives.

The magistrates name rectors or ministers to all the parishes.

The Presbyterian government is established; and the highest ecclesiastical court is an assembly or synod of all the presbyters of the county. The magistrates may take any cause from this court, and determine it themselves.

The magistrates may try, and depose or suspend any presbyter.

The militia is established in imitation of that of Switzerland, which being well known, we shall not insist upon it. It will only be proper to make this addition, that an army of 20,000 men be annually drawn out by rotation, paid and encamped during six weeks in summer, that the duty of a camp may not be altogether unknown.

The magistrates appoint all the colonels and downwards. The senate all upwards. During war, the general appoints the colonel and downwards, and his commission is good for a twelvemonth. But after that, it must be confirmed by the magistrates of the county to which the regiment belongs. The magistrates may break any officer in the county regiment: And the senate may do the same to any officer in the service. If the magistrates do not think proper to confirm the general's choice, they may appoint other officer in the place of him they reject.



All crimes are tried within the county by the magistrates and a jury: But the senate can stop any trial, and bring it before themselves.

Any county may indict any man before the senate for any crime.

The protector, the two secretaries, the council of state, with any five or more that the senate appoints, are possessed, on extraordinary emergencies, of *dictatorial* power for six months.

The protector may pardon any person condemned by the inferior courts.

In time of war, no officer of the army that is in the field can have any civil office in the commonwealth.

The capital, which we shall call London, may be allowed four members in the senate. It may therefore be divided into four counties. The representatives of each of these choose one senator, and ten magistrates. There are therefore in the city four senators, forty-four magistrates, and four hundred representatives. The magistrates have the same authority as in the counties. The representatives also have the same authority; but they never meet in one general court: They give their votes in their particular county or division of hundreds.

When they enact any bye-law, the greater number of counties or divisions determines the matter: And where these are equal, the magistrates have the casting vote.

The magistrates choose the mayor, sheriff, recorder, and other officers of the city.

In the commonwealth, no representative, magistrate, or senator, as such, has any salary. The protector, secretaries, councils, and ambassadors, have salaries.

The first year in every century is set apart for correcting all inequalities, which time may have produced in the representatives. This must be done by the legislature.

The following political aphorisms may explain the reason of these orders.

The lower sort of people and small proprietors are good enough judges of one not very distant from them in rank or habitation; and therefore, in their parochial meetings, will probably choose the best, or nearly the best representative: But they are wholly unfit for county-meetings, and for electing into the higher offices of the republic. Their ignorance gives the grandees an opportunity of deceiving them.

Ten thousand, even though they were not annually elected, are a basis large enough for any free government. It is true, the nobles in Poland are more than 10,000, and yet these oppress the people. But as power always continues there in the same persons and families, this makes them, in a manner, a different

nation from the people. Besides, the nobles are there united under a few heads of families.

All free governments must consist of two councils, a lesser and greater ; or, in other words, of a senate and people. The people, as Harrington observes, would want wisdom without the senate : The senate, without the people, would want honesty.

A large assembly of 1000, for instance, to represent the people, if allowed to debate, would fall into disorder. If not allowed to debate, the senate has a negative upon them, and the worst kind of negative, that before resolution.

Here therefore is an inconvenience, which no government has yet fully remedied, but which is the easiest to be remedied in the world. If the people debate, all is confusion : If they do not debate, they can only resolve ; and then the senate carves for them. Divide the people into many separate bodies ; and then they may debate with safety, and every inconvenience seems to be prevented.

Cardinal do Retz says, that all numerous assemblies, however composed, are mere mob, and swayed in their debates by the least motive. This we find confirmed by daily experience. When an absurdity strikes a member, he conveys it to his neighbour, and so on, till the whole be infected. Separate this great body ; and though every member be only of middling sense, it is not probable that any thing but reason can prevail over the whole. Influence and example being removed, good sense will always get the better of bad among a number of people.

There are two things to be guarded against in every *senate* : Its combination and its division. Its combination is most dangerous. And against this inconvenience we have provided the following remedies : 1. The great dependence of the senators on the people by annual elections ; and that not by an undistinguished rabble, like the English electors, but by men of fortune and education. 2. The small power they are allowed. They have few offices to dispose of. Almost all are given by the magistrates in the counties. 3. The court of competitors ; which being composed of men that are their rivals, next to them in interest, and uneasy in their present situation, will be sure to take all advantages against them.

The division of the senate is prevented, 1. By the smallness of their number. 2. As faction supposes a combination in a separate interest, it is prevented by their dependence on the people. 3. They have a power of expelling any factious member. It is true, when another member of the same spirit comes from the county, they have no power of expelling him : Nor is it fit they should ; for that shows the humour to be in the people, and may possibly arise from some ill conduct in public affairs. 4. Almost any man, in a senate so regularly chosen by the people

may be supposed fit for any civil office. It would be proper, therefore, for the senate to form some *general* resolutions with regard to the disposing of offices among the members: Which resolutions would not confine them in critical times, when extraordinary parts on the one hand, or extraordinary stupidity on the other, appears in any senator; but they would be sufficient to prevent intrigue and faction, by making the disposal of the offices a thing of course. For instance, let it be a resolution, That no man shall enjoy any office till he has sat four years in the senate: That except ambassadors, no man shall be in office two years following: That no man shall attain the higher offices but through the lower: That no man shall be protector twice, &c. The senate of Venice govern themselves by such resolutions.

In foreign politics the interest of the senate can scarcely ever be divided from that of the people; and therefore it is fit to make the senate absolute with regard to them; otherwise there could be no secrecy or refined policy. Besides, without money no alliance can be executed; and the senate is still sufficiently dependent. Not to mention, that the legislative power, being always superior to the executive, the magistrates or representatives may interpose whenever they think proper.

The chief support of the British government is the opposition of interest: But that, though in the main serviceable, breeds endless factions. In the foregoing plan, it does all the good without any of the harm. The *competitors* have no power of controlling the senate: They have only the power of accusing, and appealing to the people.

It is necessary, likewise, to prevent both combination and division in the thousand magistrates. This is done sufficiently by the separation of places and interests.

But lest that should not be sufficient, their dependence on the 10,000 for their elections, serves to the same purpose.

Nor is that all: for the 10,000 may resume the power whenever they please; and not only when they all please, but when any five of a hundred please; which will happen upon the very first suspicion of a separate interest.

The 10,000 are too large a body either to unite or divide, except when they meet in one place, and fall under the guidance of ambitious leaders. Not to mention their annual election, by the whole body of the people, that are of any consideration.

A small commonwealth is the happiest government in the world within itself, because every thing lies under the eye of the rulers: But it may be subdued by greater force from without. This scheme seems to have all the advantages both of a great and a little commonwealth.

Every county-law may be annulled either by the senate or

another county; because that shows an opposition of interest: In which case no part ought to decide for itself. The matter must be referred to the whole, which will best determine what agrees with general interest.

As to the clergy and militia, the reasons of these orders are obvious. Without the dependence of the clergy on the civil magistrates, and without a militia, it is in vain to think that any free government will ever have security or stability.

In many governments, the inferior magistrates have no rewards but what arise from their ambition, vanity, or public spirit. The salaries of the French judges amount not to the interest of the sums they pay for their offices. The Dutch burgo—masters have little more immediate profit than the English justices of peace, or the members of the House of Commons formerly. But lest any should suspect that this would beget negligence in the administration (which is little to be feared, considering the natural ambition of mankind), let the magistrates have competent salaries. The senators have access to so many honourable and lucrative offices, that their attendance needs not be bought. There is little attendance required of the representatives.

That the foregoing plan of government is practicable, no one can doubt who considers the resemblance that it bears to the commonwealth of the United Provinces, a wise and renowned government. The alterations in the present scheme seems all evidently for the better. 1. The representation is more equal. 2. The unlimited power of the burgo-masters in the towns, which forms a perfect aristocracy in the Dutch commonwealth, is corrected by a well-tempered democracy, in giving to the people the annual election of the county representatives. 3. The negative, which every province and town has upon the whole body of the Dutch Republic, with regard to alliances, peace, and war, and the imposition of taxes, is here removed. 4. The counties, in the present plan, are not so independent of each other, nor do they form separate bodies so much as the seven provinces; where the jealousy and envy of the smaller provinces and towns against the greater, particularly Holland and Amsterdam, have frequently disturbed the government. 5. Larger powers, though of the safest kind, are entrusted to the senate than the States-General possess; by which means, the former may become more expeditious and secret in their resolutions than it is possible for the latter.

The chief alterations that could be made on the British government, in order to bring it to the most perfect model of limited monarchy, seem to be the following. *First*, The plan of Cromwell's parliament ought to be restored; by making the representation equal, and by allowing none to vote in the county elections who possess not a property of L. 200 pounds value. *Secondly*,

As such a house of commons would be too weighty for a frail House of Lords, like the present, the Bishops, and Scotch Peers, ought to be removed : The number of the upper house ought to be raised to three or four hundred : Their seats not hereditary, but during life : They ought to have the election of their own members ; and no commoner should be allowed to refuse a seat that was offered him. By this means the House of Lords would consist entirely of the men of chief credit, abilities, and interest in the nation ; and every turbulent leader in the House of Commons might be taken off, and connected by interest with the House of Peers. Such an aristocracy would be an excellent barrier both to the monarchy and against it. At present, the balance of our government depends in some measure on the abilities and behaviour of the sovereign ; which are variable and uncertain circumstances.

This plan of limited monarchy, however corrected, seems still liable to three great inconveniences. *First*, It removes not entirely, though it may soften, the parties of *court* and *country*. *Secondly*. The king's personal character must still have great influence on the government. *Thirdly*, The sword is in the hands of a single person, who will always neglect to discipline the militia, in order to have a pretence for keeping up a standing army.

We shall conclude this subject, with observing the falsehood of the common opinion, that no large state, such as France or Great Britain, could ever be modelled into a commonwealth, but that such a form of government can only take place in a city or small territory. The contrary seems probable. Though it is more difficult to form a republican government in an extensive country than in a city, there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult and faction. It is not easy for the distant parts of a large state to combine in any plan of free government ; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person, who, by means of this popular favour, may seize the power, and forcing the more obstinate to submit, may establish a monarchical government. On the other hand, a city readily concurs in the same notions of government, the natural equality of property favours liberty, and the nearness of habitation enables the citizens mutually to assist each other. Even under absolute princes, the subordinate government of cities is commonly republican ; while that of counties and provinces is monarchical. But these same circumstances, which facilitate the erection of commonwealths, in cities, render their constitution more frail and uncertain. Democracies are turbulent. For however the people may be separated or divided into small parties, either in their votes or elections, their near habitation in a city will always make the force of

popular tides and currents very sensible. Aristocracies are better adapted for peace and order, and accordingly were most admired by ancient writers; but they are jealous and oppressive. In a large government, which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people who may be admitted into the first elections or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates, who direct all the movements. At the same time, the parts are so distant and remote, that it is very difficult, either by intrigue, prejudice, or passion, to hurry them into any measures against the public interest.

It is needless to inquire, whether such a government would be immortal. I allow the justness of the poet's exclamation on the endless projects of human race, *Man and for ever!* The world itself probably is not immortal. Such consuming plagues may arise as would leave even a perfect government a weak prey to its neighbours. We know not to what length enthusiasm, or other extraordinary movements of the human mind, may transport men, to the neglect of all order and public good. Where difference of interest is removed, whimsical and unaccountable factions often arise, from personal favour or enmity. Perhaps rust may grow to the springs of the most accurate political machine, and disorder its motions. Lastly, extensive conquests, when pursued, must be the ruin of every free government; and of the more perfect governments sooner than of the imperfect; because of the very advantages which the former possess above the latter. And though such a state ought to establish a fundamental law against conquests, yet republics have ambition as well as individuals, and present interest makes men forgetful of their posterity. It is a sufficient incitement to human endeavours that such a government would flourish for many ages; without pretending to bestow, on any work of man, that immortality which the Almighty seems to have refused to his own productions.

## ESSAY XXXI.

WHETHER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INCLINES MORE TO ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, OR TO A REPUBLIC.

It affords a violent prejudice against almost every science, that no prudent man, however sure of his principles, dares prophesy concerning any event, or foretell the remote consequences of things. A physician will not venture to pronounce concerning the condition of his patient a fortnight or a month after: And still less dares a politician foretell the situation of public affairs

a few years hence. Harrington thought himself so sure of his general principles, *that the balance of power depends on that of property*, that he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish monarchy in England: But his book was scarcely published when the king was restored; and we see, that monarchy has ever since subsisted upon the same footing as before. Notwithstanding this unlucky example, I will venture to examine an important question, to wit, *Whether the British government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a republic; and in which of these two species of government it will most probably terminate?* As there seems not to be any great danger of a sudden revolution either way, I shall at least escape the shame attending my temerity, if I should be found to have been mistaken.

Those who assert, that the balance of our government inclines towards absolute monarchy, may support their opinion by the following reasons: That property has a great influence on power cannot possibly be denied; but yet the general maxim, *that the balance of the one depends on the balance of the other*, must be received with several limitations. It is evident, that much less property in a single hand will be able to counterbalance a greater property in several; not only because it is difficult to make many persons combine in the same views and measures; but because property, when united, causes much greater dependence, than the same property when dispersed. A hundred persons, of L.1000 a-year a-piece, can consume all their income, and nobody shall ever be the better for them, except their servants and tradesmen, who justly regard their profits as the product of their own labour. But a man possessed of L. 100,000 a-year, if he has either any generosity, or any cunning, may create a great dependence by obligations, and a greater still by expectations. Hence we may observe, that, in all free governments, any subject exorbitantly rich has always created jealousy, even though his riches bore no proportion to those of the state. Crassus' fortune, if I remember well, amounted only to about two millions and a half of our money; yet we find, that though his genius was nothing extraordinary, he was able, by means of his riches alone, to counterbalance, during his life time, the power of Pompéy, as well as that of Cesar, who afterwards became master of the world. The wealth of the Medici made them masters of Florence; though it is probable, it was not considerable, compared to the united property of that opulent republic.

These considerations are apt to make one entertain a magnificent idea of the British spirit and love of liberty; since we could maintain our free government, during so many centuries, against our sovereigns, who, besides the power, and dignity, and majesty of the crown, have always been possessed of much more proper-

ty, than any subject has ever enjoyed in any commonwealth. But it may be said, that this spirit, however great, will never be able to support itself against that immense property, which is now lodged in the king, and which is still increasing. Upon a moderate computation, there are near three millions a-year at the disposal of the crown. The civil list amounts to near a million; the collection of all taxes to another; and the employments in the army and navy, together with ecclesiastical preferments, to above a third million:—an enormous sum, and what may fairly be computed to be more than a thirtieth part of the whole income and labour of the kingdom. When we add to this great property, the increasing luxury of the nation, our proneness to corruption, together with the great power and prerogatives of the crown, and the command of military force, there is no one but must despair of being able, without extraordinary efforts, to support our free government much longer under these disadvantages.

On the other hand, those who maintain, that the bias of the British government leans towards a republic, may support their opinion by specious arguments. It may be said, that though this immense property in the crown be joined to the dignity of first magistrate, and to many other legal powers and prerogatives, which should naturally give it greater influence; yet it really becomes less dangerous to liberty upon that very account. Were England a republic, and were any private man possessed of a revenue, a third, or even a tenth part as large as that of the crown, he would very justly excite jealousy; because he would infallibly have great authority in the government. And such an irregular authority, not avowed by the laws, is always more dangerous than a much greater authority derived from them. A man possessed of usurped power, can set no bounds to his pretensions: His partisans have liberty to hope for every thing in his favour: His enemies provoke his ambition with his fears, by the violence of their opposition: And the government being thrown into a ferment, every corrupted humour in the state naturally gathers to him. On the contrary, a legal authority, though great, has always some bounds, which terminate both the hopes and pretensions of the person possessed of it: The laws must have provided a remedy against its excesses: Such an eminent magistrate has much to fear, and little to hope from his usurpations: And as his legal authority is quietly submitted to, he has small temptation and small opportunity of extending it farther. Besides, it happens, with regard to ambitious aims and projects, what may be observed with regard to sects of philosophy and religion. A new sect excites such a ferment, and is both opposed and defended with such vehemence, that it always spreads faster, and multiplies its partisans with greater rapidity, than any old established



opinion, recommended by the sanction of the laws and of antiquity. Such is the nature of novelty, that, where any thing pleases, it becomes doubly agreeable, if new; but if it displeases, it is doubly displeasing upon that very account. And in most cases, the violence of enemies is favourable to ambitious projects, as well as the zeal of partisans.

It may farther be said, that, though men be much governed by interest; yet even interest itself, and all human affairs are entirely governed by *opinion*. Now, there has been a sudden and sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and of liberty.\* Most people, in this island, have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: The clergy have much lost their credit: Their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and even, religion can scarcely support itself in the world. The mere name of *king* commands little respect; and to talk of a king as God's vicergerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one. Though the crown, by means of its large revenue, may maintain its authority, in times of tranquillity, upon private interest and influence; yet, as the least shock or convulsion must break all these interests to pieces, the royal power, being no longer supported by the settled principles and opinions of men, will immediately dissolve. Had men been in the same disposition at the *Revolution*, as they are at present, monarchy would have run a great risk of being entirely lost in this island.

\* The infidel tendencies of the public mind in Great Britain at this period, were indeed, to a lamentable extent, such as Hume hero describes them, but the bold assertion, hazarded with all "the confidence of truth," as if it were an acknowledged and indisputable fact, that this state of things was owing to "the progress of learning and of liberty," is sufficiently falsified by the experience of modern times—an age of greater liberty and of learning far more sound and extensive than that which preceded it.

True religion is ever in perfect harmony with rational liberty and a just philosophy; notwithstanding that shallow draughts at the Pierian spring may intoxicate, and Freedom's wild excesses bewilder the mind into irreligion and infidelity.—The natural reaction from the gloomy austerities of Puritanism under the Protectorate; the gross licentiousness brought in with the Restoration; and the unhappy coincidence between the impulse given to the love of liberty, on the expulsion of the Stuarts, and the introduction of Socinian impieties and free-thinking, will sufficiently account for the change in the opinions of men adverted to in the text.

In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,  
Sprang the rank weed, and thrived with large increase.

The following licence of a foreign reign  
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain:  
Then unbelieving priests reformed the nation,  
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;  
When Heaven's free subjects might their rights dispute,  
Lest God himself should seem too absolute.

Encouraged thus, Wit's Titans braved the skies,  
And the Press groaned with licensed blasphemies!

The reader will remember that Pope and Hume describe the same "flagitious times."—ED.

Durst I venture to deliver my own sentiments amidst these opposite arguments, I would assert, that, unless there happen some extraordinary convulsion, the power of the crown, by means of its large revenue, is rather upon the increase ; though at the same time I own, that its progress seems very slow, and almost insensible. The tide has run long and with some rapidity to the side of popular government, and is just beginning to turn towards monarchy.

It is well known, that every government must come to a period, and that death is unavoidable to the political as well as to the animal body. But, as one kind of death may be preferable to another, it may be inquired, whether it be more desirable for the British constitution to terminate in a popular government, or in an absolute monarchy ? Here I would frankly declare, that, though liberty be preferable to slavery, in almost every case ; yet I should rather wish to see an absolute monarch than a republic in this island. For let us consider what kind of republic we have reason to expect. The question is not concerning any fine imaginary republic, of which a man may form a plan in his closet. There is no doubt, but a popular government may be imagined more perfect than absolute monarchy, or even than our present constitution. But what reason have we to expect that any such government will ever be established in Great Britain, upon the dissolution of our monarchy ? If any single person acquire power enough to take our constitution to pieces, and put it up anew, he is really an absolute monarch ; and we have already had an instance of this kind, sufficient to convince us, that such a person will never resign his power, or establish any free government. Matters, therefore, must be trusted to their natural progress and operation ; and the house of commons, according to its present constitution, must be the only legislature in such a popular government. The inconveniences attending such a situation of affairs, present themselves by thousands. If the house of commons, in such a case, ever dissolve itself, which is not to be expected, we may look for a civil war every election. If it continue itself, we shall suffer all the tyranny of a faction subdivided into new factions. And, as such a violent government cannot long subsist, we shall, at last, after many convulsions and civil wars, find repose in absolute monarchy, which it would have been happier for us to have established peaceably from the beginning. Absolute monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the British constitution.

Thus, if we have reason to be more jealous of monarchy, because the danger is more imminent from that quarter ; we have also reason to be more jealous of popular government, because that danger is more terrible. This may teach us a lesson of moderation in all our political controversies.

## ESSAY XXXII.

## THE EPICUREAN\*.

It is a great mortification to the vanity of man, that his utmost art and industry can never equal the meanest of Nature's productions, either for beauty or value. Art is only the under-workman, and is employed to give a few strokes of embellishment to those pieces which come from the hand of the master. Some of the drapery may be of his drawing, but he is not allowed to touch the principal figure. Art may make a suit of clothes, but nature must produce a man.

Even in those productions commonly denominated works of art, we find that the noblest of the kind are beholden for their chief beauty to the force and happy influence of nature. To the native enthusiasm of the poets, we owe whatever is admirable in their productions. The greatest genius, where nature at any time fails him, (for she is not equal,) throws aside the lyre, and hopes not, from the rules of art, to reach that divine harmony, which must proceed from her inspiration alone. How poor are those songs, where a happy flow of fancy has not furnished materials for art to embellish and refine!

But of all the fruitless attempts of art, no one is so ridiculous, as that which the severe philosophers have undertaken, the producing of an *artificial happiness*, and making us be pleased by rules of reason, and by reflection. Why did none of them claim the reward, which Xerxes promised to him, who should invent a new pleasure? Unless, perhaps, they invented so many pleasures for their own use, that they despised riches, and stood in no need of any enjoyments, which the rewards of that monarch could procure them. I am apt, indeed, to think, that they were not willing to furnish the Persian court with a new pleasure, by presenting it with so new and unusual an object of ridicule. Their speculations, when confined to theory, and gravely delivered in the schools of Greece, might excite admiration in their ignorant pupils; but the attempting to reduce such principles to practice would soon have betrayed their absurdity.

You pretend to make me happy by reason, and by rules of art. You must then create me anew by rules of art, for on my original frame and structure does my happiness depend. But you want power to effect this, and skill too, I am afraid; nor can I entertain a less opinion of nature's wisdom than of yours; and let her conduct the machine which she has so wisely framed: I find that I should only spoil it by tampering.

\* Or, *The man of elegance and pleasure*. The intention of this and the three following Essays is not so much to explain accurately the sentiments of the ancient sects of philosophy, as to deliver the sentiments of sects that naturally form themselves in the world, and entertain different ideas of human life and happiness. I have given each of them the name of the philosophical sect to which it bears the greatest affinity.

To what purpose should I pretend to regulate; refine, or invigorate any of those springs or principles which nature has implanted in me? Is this the road by which I must reach happiness? But happiness implies ease, contentment, repose, and pleasure; not watchfulness, care, and fatigue. The health of my body consists in the facility with which all its operations are performed. The stomach digests the aliments; the heart circulates the blood; the brain separates and refines the spirits; and all this without my concerning myself in the matter. When by my will alone I can stop the blood, as it runs with impetuosity along its canals, then may I hope to change the course of my sentiments and passions. In vain should I strain my faculties, and endeavour to receive pleasure from an object, which is not fitted by nature to affect my organs with delight. I may give myself pain by my fruitless endeavours, but shall never reach any pleasure.

Away then with all those vain pretences of making ourselves happy within ourselves, of feasting on our own thoughts, of being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and of despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects. This is the voice of pride, not of nature. And it were well if even this pride could support itself, and communicate a real *inward* pleasure, however melancholy or severe. But this impotent pride can do no more than regulate the *outside*, and with infinite pains and attention compose the language and countenance to a philosophical dignity, in order to deceive the ignorant vulgar. The heart, mean while, is empty of all enjoyment; and the mind, unsupported by its proper objects, sinks into the deepest sorrow and dejection. Miserable, but vain mortal! Thy mind be happy within itself! With what resources is it endowed to fill so immense a void, and supply the place of all thy bodily senses and faculties? Can thy head subsist without thy other members? In such a situation,

What foolish figure must it make!  
Do nothing else but sleep and wake.

Into such a lethargy, or such a melancholy, must thy mind be plunged, when deprived of foreign occupations and enjoyments.

Keep me, therefore, no longer in this violent constraint. Confine me not within myself, but point out to me those objects and pleasures which afford the chief enjoyment. But why do I apply to you, proud and ignorant sages, to shew me the road to happiness? Let me consult my own passions and inclinations. In them must I read the dictates of nature, not in your frivolous discourses.

But see, propitious to my wishes, the divine, the amiable PLEASURE\*, the supreme love of Gods and men, advances towards

\* *Div Voluptas*. LUCRET.

me. At her approach, my heart beats with genial heat, and every sense and every faculty is dissolved in joy; while she pours around me all the embellishments of the spring, and all the treasures of the autumn. The melody of her voice charms my ears with the softest music, as she invites me to partake of those delicious fruits, which, with a smile that diffuses a glory on the heavens and the earth, she presents to me. The sportive cupids who attend her, or fan me with their odoriferous wings, or pour on my head the most fragrant oils, or offer me their sparkling nectar in golden goblets; O! for ever let me spread my limbs on this bed of roses, and thus, thus feel the delicious moments, with soft and downy steps, glide along. But cruel chance. Whither do you fly so fast? Why do my ardent wishes, and that load of pleasures under which you labour, rather hasten than retard your unrelenting pace. Suffer me to enjoy this soft repose, after all my fatigues in search of happiness. Suffer me to satiate myself with these delicacies, after the pains of so long and so foolish an abstinence.

But it will not do. The roses have lost their hue, the fruit its flavour, and that delicious wine, whose fumes so late intoxicated all my senses with such delight, now solicits in vain the sated palate. *Pleasure* smiles at my languor. She beckons her sister, *Virtue*, to come to her assistance. The gay, the frolic *Virtue*, observes the call, and brings along the whole troop of my jovial friends. Welcome, thrice welcome, my ever dear companions, to these shady bowers, and to this luxurious repast. Your presence has restored to the rose its hue, and to the fruit its flavour. The vapours of this sprightly nectar now again ply around my heart; while you partake of my delights, and discover, in your cheerful looks, the pleasure which you receive from my happiness and satisfaction. The like do I receive from yours; and, encouraged by your joyous presence, shall again renew the feast, with which, from too much enjoyment, my senses are well nigh sated; while the mind kept not pace with the body, nor afforded relief to her overburdened partner.

In our cheerful discourses, better than in the formal reasoning of the schools, is true wisdom to be found. In our friendly endearments, better than in the hollow debates of statesmen and pretended patriots, does true virtue display itself. Forgetful of the past, secure of the future, let us here enjoy the present; and while we yet possess a being, let us fix some good, beyond the power of fate or fortune. To-morrow will bring its own pleasures along with it: Or, should it disappoint our fond wishes, we shall at least enjoy the pleasure of reflecting on the pleasures of to-day.

Fear not, my friends, that the barbarous dissonance of *Bacchus*, and of his revellers, should break in upon this entertainment, and

confound us with their turbulent and clamorous pleasures. The sprightly Muses wait around; and with their charming symphony, sufficient to soften the wolves and tigers of the savage desert, inspire a soft joy into every bosom. Peace, harmony, and concord, reign in this retreat; nor is the silence ever broken but by the music of our songs, or the cheerful accents of our friendly voices.

But hark! the favourite of the muses, the gentle Damon strikes the lyre; and while he accompanies its harmonious notes with his more harmonious song, he inspires us with the same happy debauch of fancy, by which he is himself transported. "Ye happy youths," he sings, "Ye favoured of Heaven, while the wanton spring pours upon you all her blooming honours, let not *glory* seduce you, with her delusive blaze, to pass in perils and dangers this delicious season, this prime of life. Wisdom points out to you the road to pleasure: Nature too beckons you to follow her in that smooth and flowery path. Will you shut your ears to their commanding voice? Will you harden your heart to their soft allurements? Oh, deluded mortals! thus to lose your youth, thus to throw away so invaluable a present, to trifle with so perishing a blessing. Contemplate well your recompense. Consider that glory, which so allures your proud hearts, and seduces you with your own praises. It is an echo, a dream, nay the shadow of a dream, dissipated by every wind, and lost by every contrary breath of the ignorant and ill-judging multitude. You fear not that even death itself shall ravish it from you. But behold! while you are yet alive, calumny bereaves you of it; ignorance neglects it; nature enjoys it not; fancy alone, renouncing every pleasure, receives this airy recompense, empty and unstable as herself."

Thus the hours pass unperceived along, and lead in their wanton train all the pleasures of sense, and all the joys of harmony and friendship. Smiling *innocence* closes the procession; and, while she presents herself to our ravished eyes, she embellishes the whole scene, and renders the view of these pleasures as transporting, after they have past us, as when, with laughing countenances, they were yet advancing towards us.

But the sun has sunk below the horizon; and darkness, stealing silently upon us, has now buried all nature in an universal shade. "Rejoice my friends, continue your repast, or change it for soft repose. Though absent, your joy or your tranquillity shall still be mine," But *whither do you go? Or what new pleasures call*

An imitation of the Syrens song in Tasso :

"O Giovineti, mentre Aprile et Maggio

"V' ammantan di fiorité et verde spoglio," &c.

*Giuresalemme liberata, Canto 14.*

*you from our society? Is there aught agreeable without your friends? And can aught please in which we partake not?* "Yes, my friends; the joy which I now seek, admits not of your participation. Here alone I wish your absence; And here alone can I find a sufficient compensation for the loss of your society."

But I have not advanced far through the shades of the thick wood, which spreads a double night around me, ere, methinks, I perceive through the gloom the charming Cælia, the mistress of my wishes, who wanders impatient through the grove, and, preventing the appointed hour, silently chides my tardy steps. But the joy which she receives from my presence, best pleads my excuse; and dissipating every anxious and every angry thought, leaves room for nought but mutual joy and rapture. With what words, my fair one, shall I express my tenderness, or describe the emotions which now warm my transported bosom! Words are too faint to describe my love; and if, alas! you feel not the same flame within you, in vain shall I endeavour to convey to you a just conception of it. But your every word and every motion suffice to remove this doubt; and while they express your passion, serve also to inflame mine. How amiable this solitude, this silence, this darkness! No objects now importune the ravished soul. The thought, the sense, all full of nothing but our mutual happiness, wholly possess the mind, and convey a pleasure, which deluded mortals vainly seek for in every other enjoyment.—

But why does your bosom heave with these sighs, while tears bathe your glowing cheeks? Why distract your heart with such vain anxieties? Why so often ask me, *How long my love shall yet endure?* Alas! my Cælia, can I resolve this question? *Do I know how long my life shall yet endure?* But does this also disturb your tender breast? And is the image of our frail mortality for ever present with you, to throw a damp on your gayest hours, and poison even those joys which love inspires? Consider rather, that if life be frail, if youth be transitory, we should well employ the present moment, and lose no part of so perishable an existence. Yet a little moment, and *these* shall be no more. We shall be, as if we had never been. Not a memory of us be left upon earth; and even the fabulous shades below will not afford us a habitation. Our fruitless anxieties, our vain projects, our uncertain speculations, shall all be swallowed up and lost. Our present doubts, concerning the original cause of all things, must never, alas! be resolved. This alone we may be certain of, that if any governing mind preside, he must be pleased to see us fulfil the ends of our being, and enjoy that pleasure for which alone we were created. Let this reflection give ease to your anxious thoughts; but render not your joys too serious, by dwelling for ever upon it. It is sufficient, once to be acquainted

with this philosophy, in order to give an unbounded loose to love and jollity; and remove all the scruples of a vain superstition: But while youth and passion, my fair one, prompt our eager desires, we must find gayer subjects of discourse, to intermix with these amorous caresses.

## ESSAY XXXIII.

### THE STOIC\*.

THERE is this obvious and material difference in the conduct of nature, with regard to men and other animals, that, having endowed the former with a sublime celestial spirit, and having given him an affinity with superior beings, she allows not such noble faculties to lie lethargic or idle; but urges him by necessity to employ, on every emergence, his utmost *art* and *industry*. Brute-creatures have many of their necessities supplied by nature, being clothed and armed by this beneficent parent of all things: And where their own *industry* is requisite on any occasion, nature, by implanting instincts, still supplies them with the *art*, and guides them to their good by her unerring precepts. But man, exposed naked and indigent to the rude elements, rises slowly from that helpless state, by the care and vigilance of his parents; and, having attained his utmost growth and perfection, reaches only a capacity of subsisting, by his own care and vigilance. Every thing is sold to skill and labour; and where nature furnishes the materials, they are still rude and unfinished, till industry, ever active and intelligent, refines them from their rude state, and fits them for human use and convenience.

Acknowledge, therefore, O man! the beneficence of nature; for she has given thee that intelligence which supplies all thy necessities. But let not indolence, under the false appearance of gratitude, persuade thee to rest contented with her presents. Wouldst thou return to the raw herbage for thy food, to the open sky for thy covering, and to stones and clubs for thy defence, against the ravenous animals of the desert? Then return also to thy savage manners, to thy timorous superstition, to thy brutal ignorance; and sink thyself below those animals, whose condition thou admirest, and wouldst so fondly imitate.

Thy kind parent, Nature, having given thee art and intelligence, has filled the whole globe with materials to employ these talents: Harken to her voice, which so plainly tells thee, that thou thyself shouldst also be the object of thy industry; and that by art and attention alone, thou canst acquire that ability

\* Or the man of action and virtue.



which will raise thee to thy proper station in the universe. Behold this artisan who converts a rude and shapeless stone into a noble metal; and, moulding that metal by his cunning hands, creates, as it were by magic, every weapon for his defence, and every utensil for his convenience. He has not this skill from nature: Use and practice have taught it him; and if thou wouldst emulate his success, thou must follow his laborious footsteps.

But while thou *ambitiously* aspirest to perfecting thy bodily powers and faculties, wouldst thou *meanly* neglect thy mind, and, from a preposterous sloth, leave it still rude and uncultivated as it came from the hands of nature? Far be such folly and negligence from every rational being. If nature has been frugal in her gifts and endowments, there is the more need of art to supply her defects. If she has been generous and liberal, know that she still expects industry and application on our part, and revenges herself in proportion to our negligent ingratitude. The richest genius, like the most fertile soil, when uncultivated, shoots up into the rankest weeds; and instead of vines and olives for the pleasure and use of man, produces, to its slothful owner, the most abundant crop of poisons.

The great end of all human industry, is the attainment of happiness. For this were arts invented, sciences cultivated, laws ordained, and societies modelled, by the most profound wisdom of patriots and legislators. Even the lonely savage, who lies exposed to the inclemency of the elements, and the fury of wild beasts, forgets not, for a moment, this grand object of his being. Ignorant as he is of every art of life, he still keeps in view the end of all those arts, and eagerly seeks for felicity amidst that darkness with which he is environed. But as much as the wildest savage is inferior to the polished citizen, who, under the protection of laws, enjoys every convenience which industry has invented; so much is this citizen himself inferior to the man of virtue, and the true philosopher, who governs his appetites, subdues his passions, and has learned, from reason, to set a just value on every pursuit and enjoyment. For is there an art and apprenticeship necessary for every other attainment? And is there no art of life, no rule, no precepts to direct us in this principal concern? Can no particular pleasure be attained without skill; and can the whole be regulated, without reflection or intelligence, by the blind guidance of appetite and instinct? Surely then no mistakes are ever committed in this affair, but every man, however dissolute and negligent, proceeds in the pursuit of happiness, with as unerring a motion, as that which the celestial bodies observe, when conducted by the hand of the Almighty, they roll along the ethereal plains. But if mistakes be often, be inevitably committed, let us register these mistakes; let us consider their causes;

let us weigh their importance; let us inquire for their remedies. When, from this, we have fixed all the rules of conduct, we are *philosophers*. When we have reduced these rules to practice, we are *sages*.

Like many subordinate artists, employed to form the several wheels and springs of a machine; such are those who excel in all the particular arts of life. *He* is the master workman who puts those several parts together; moves them according to just harmony and proportion; and produces true felicity as the result of their conspiring order.

While thou hast such an alluring object in view, shall that labour and attention, requisite to the attainment of thy end, ever seem burdensome and intolerable? Know, that this labour itself is the chief ingredient of the felicity to which thou aspirest; and that every enjoyment soon becomes insipid and distasteful, when not acquired by fatigue and industry. See the hardy hunters rise from their downy couches, shake off the slumbers which still weigh down their heavy eye-lids, and ere *Aurora* has yet covered the heavens with her flaming mantle, hasten to the forest. They leave behind, in their own houses, and in the neighbouring plains, animals of every kind, whose flesh furnishes the most delicious fare, and which offer themselves to the fatal stroke. Laborious man disdains so easy a purchase. He seeks for a prey, which hides itself from his search, or flies from his pursuit, or defends itself from his violence. Having exerted in the chase every passion of the mind, and every member of the body, he then finds the charms of repose, and with joy compares his pleasures to those of his engaging labours.

And can vigorous industry give pleasure to the pursuit even of the most worthless prey, which frequently escapes our toils? And cannot the same industry render the cultivating of our mind, the moderating of our passions, the enlightening of our reason, an agreeable occupation; while we are every day sensible of our progress, and behold our inward features and countenance brightening incessantly with new charms? Begin by curing yourself of this lethargic indolence; the task is not difficult: You need but taste the sweets of honest labour. Proceed to learn the just value of every pursuit; long study is not requisite: Compare, though but for once, the mind to the body, virtue to fortune, and glory to pleasure. You will then perceive the advantages of industry: You will then be sensible what are the proper objects of your industry.

In vain do you seek repose from beds of roses: In vain do you hope for enjoyment from the most delicious wines and fruits. Your indolence itself becomes a fatigue; your pleasure itself creates disgust. The mind, unexercised, finds every delight

insipid and loathsome; and ere yet the body, full of noxious humours, feels the torment of its multiplied diseases, your nobler part is sensible of the invading poison, and seeks in vain to relieve its anxiety by new pleasures, which still augment the fatal malady.

I need not tell you, that, by this eager pursuit of pleasure, you more and more expose yourself to fortune and accidents, and rivet your affections on external objects, which chance may, in a moment, ravish from you. I shall suppose that your indulgent stars favour you still with the enjoyment of your riches and possessions. I prove to you, that even in the midst of your luxurious pleasures, you are unhappy; and that, by too much indulgence, you are incapable of enjoying what prosperous fortune still allows you to possess.

But surely the instability of fortune is a consideration not to be overlooked or neglected. Happiness cannot possibly exist where there is no security; and security can have no place where fortune has any dominion. Though that unstable deity should not exert her rage against you, the dread of it would still torment you; would disturb your slumbers, haunt your dreams, and throw a damp on the jollity of your most delicious banquets.

The temple of wisdom is seated on a rock, above the rage of the fighting elements, and inaccessible to all the malice of man. The rolling thunder breaks below; and those more terrible instruments of human fury reach not to so sublime a height. The sage, while he breathes that serene air, looks down with pleasure, mixed with compassion, on the errors of mistaken mortals, who blindly seek for the true path of life, and pursue riches, nobility, honour, or power, for genuine felicity. The greater part he beholds disappointed of their found wishes: Some lament, that having once possessed the object of their desires, it is ravished from them by envious fortune; and all complain, that even their own vows, though granted, cannot give them happiness, or relieve the anxiety of their distracted minds.

But does the sage always preserve himself in this philosophical indifference; and rest contented with lamenting the miseries of mankind, without ever employing himself for their relief? Does he constantly indulge this severe wisdom, which, by pretending to elevate him above human accidents, does in reality harden his heart, and render him careless of the interests of mankind, and of society? No; he knows that in this sullen *Apathy*, neither true wisdom nor true happiness can be found. He feels too strongly the charm of the social affections, ever to counteract so sweet, so natural, so virtuous a propensity. Even when, bathed in tears, he laments the miseries of the human race, of his country, of his friends, and unable to give succour, can only

*and the passion for conquest, than the true system of astronomy. What a poor thing is even the whole globe in comparison of the infinite extent of Nature?* This consideration is evidently too distant ever to have any effect. Or, if it had any, would it not destroy patriotism as well as ambition? The same gallant author adds, with some reason, that the bright eyes of the ladies are the only objects which lose nothing of their lustre or value from the most extensive views of astronomy, but stand proof against every system. Would philosophers advise us to limit our affections to them?

*Exile, says Plutarch to a friend in banishment, is no evil: Mathematicians tell us, that the whole earth is but a point, compared to the heavens. To change one's country, then, is little more than to remove from one street to another. Man is not a plant, rooted in a certain spot of earth: All soils and all climates are alike suited to him\*.* These topics are admirable, could they fall only into the hands of banished persons. But what if they come also to the knowledge of those who are employed in public affairs, and destroy all their attachment to their native country? Or will they operate like the quack's medicine, which is equally good for a diabetes and a dropsy?

It is certain, were a superior being thrust into a human body, that the whole of life would to him appear so mean, contemptible, and puerile, that he never could be induced to take part in any thing, and would scarcely give attention to what passes around him. To engage him to such a condescension as to play even the part of a Philip with zeal and alacrity, would be much more difficult, than to constrain the same Philip, after having been a king and a conqueror during fifty years, to mend old shoes with proper care and attention, the occupation which Lucian assigns him in the infernal regions. Now all the same topics of disdain towards human affairs, which could operate on this supposed being, occur also to a philosopher; but being, in some measure, disproportioned to human capacity, and not being fortified by the experience of any thing better, they make not a full impression on him. He sees, but he feels not sufficiently their truth; and is always a sublime philosopher, when he needs not; that is, as long as nothing disturbs him, or rouses his affections. While others play, he wonders at their keenness and ardour; but he no sooner puts in his own stake, than he is commonly transported with the same passions, that he had so much condemned, while he remained a spectator.

There are two considerations, chiefly, to be met with in books of philosophy, from which any important effect is to be expected,

\* *De exilio.*

and that because these considerations are drawn from common life, and occur upon the most superficial view of human affairs. When we reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of life, how despicable seem all our pursuits of happiness? And even, if we would extend our concern beyond our own life, how frivolous appear our most enlarged and most generous projects; when we consider the incessant changes and revolutions of human affairs, by which laws and learning, books and government, are hurried away by time, as by a rapid stream, and are lost in the immense ocean of matter? Such a reflection certainly tends to mortify all our passions: But does it not thereby counterwork the artifice of nature, who has happily deceived us into an opinion, that human life is of some importance? And may not such a reflection be employed with success by voluptuous reasoners, in order to lead us, from the paths of action and virtue, into the flowery fields of indolence and pleasure?

We are informed by Thucydides, that, during the famous plague of Athens, when death seemed present to every one, a dissolute mirth and gaiety prevailed among the people, who exhorted one another to make the most of life as long as it endured. The same observation is made by Boccace, with regard to the plague of Florence. A like principle makes soldiers, during war, be more addicted to riot and expense, than any other race of men. Present pleasure is always of importance; and whatever diminishes the importance of all other objects, must bestow on it an additional influence and value.

The *second* philosophical consideration, which may often have an influence on the affections, is derived, from a comparison of our own condition with the condition of others. This comparison we are continually making even in common life; but the misfortune is, that we are rather apt to compare our situation with that of our superiors, than with that of our inferiors. A philosopher corrects this natural infirmity, by turning his view to the other side, in order to render himself easy in the situation to which fortune has confined him. There are few people who are not susceptible of some consolation from this reflection, though, to a very good-natured man, the view of human miseries should rather produce sorrow than comfort, and add, to his lamentations for his own misfortunes, a deep compassion for those of others. Such is the imperfection, even of the best of these philosophical topics of consolation.\*

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, though virtue be undoubtedly the best choice, when it is attainable; yet such is the disorder and confusion of human affairs, that no perfect or

\* See NOTE [S.].

regular distribution of happiness and misery is ever, in this life to be expected. Not only the goods of fortune, and the endowments of the body (both of which are important), not only these advantages, I say, are unequally divided between the virtuous and vicious, but even the mind itself partakes, in some degree, of this disorder; and the most worthy character, by the very constitution of the passions, enjoys not always the highest felicity.

It is observable, that though every bodily pain proceeds from some disorder in the part or organ, yet the pain is not always proportioned to the disorder, but is greater or less, according to the greater or less sensibility of the part, upon which the noxious humours exert their influence. A *tooth-ache* produces more violent convulsions of pain than a *phthisis* or a *dropsy*. In like manner, with regard to the economy of the mind, we may observe, that all vice is indeed pernicious; yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degrees of vice; nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the most happy. A gloomy and melancholy disposition is certainly, *to our sentiments*, a vice or imperfection; but as it may be accompanied with great sense of honour and great integrity, it may be found in very worthy characters, though it is sufficient alone to imbitter life, and render the person affected with it completely miserable. On the other hand, a selfish villain may possess a spring and alacrity of temper, a certain *gaiety of heart*, which is indeed a good quality, but which is rewarded much beyond its merit, and when attended with good fortune, will compensate for the uneasiness and remorse arising from all the other vices.

I shall add, as an observation to the same purpose, that, if a man be liable to a vice or imperfection, it may often happen, that a good quality, which he possesses along with it, will render him more miserable, than if he were completely vicious. A person of such imbecility of temper, as to be easily broken by affliction, is more unhappy for being endowed with a generous and friendly disposition, which gives him a lively concern for others, and exposes him the more to fortune and accidents. A sense of shame, in an imperfect character, is certainly a virtue; but produces great uneasiness and remorse, from which the abandoned villain is entirely free. A very amorous complexion, with a heart incapable of friendship, is happier than the same excess in love, with a generosity of temper, which transports a man beyond himself, and renders him a total slave to the object of his passion.

In a word, human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour, than by general principles. Shall we engage ourselves in it with passion

and anxiety? It is not worthy of so much concern. Shall we be indifferent about what happens? We lose all the pleasure of the game by our phlegm and carelessness. While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone; and death, though *perhaps* they receive him differently, yet treats alike the fool and the philosopher. To reduce life to exact rule and method is commonly a painful, oft a fruitless occupation: And is it not also a proof, that we overvalue the prize for which we contend? Even to reason so carefully concerning it, and to fix with accuracy its just idea, would be overvaluing it, were it not that, to some tempers, this occupation is one of the most amusing in which life could possibly be employed.

---

## ESSAY XXXVI.

---

### OF POLYGAMY AND DIVORCES.

As marriage is an engagement entered into by mutual consent and has for its end the propagation of the species, it is evident that it must be susceptible of all the variety of conditions which consent establishes, provided they be not contrary to this end.\*

A man, in conjoining himself to a woman, is bound to her according to the terms of his engagement: In begetting children, he is bound, by all the ties of nature and humanity, to provide for their subsistence and education. When he has performed these two parts of duty, no one can reproach him with injustice or injury. And as the terms of his engagement, as well as the methods of subsisting his offspring, may be various, it is mere superstition to imagine, that marriage can be entirely uniform, and will admit only of one mode or form. Did not human laws restrain the natural liberty of men, every particular marriage would be as different as contracts or bargains of any other kind or species.

As circumstances vary, and the laws propose different advantages,

\* Marriage is viewed in the text as a Civil Contract, but even as such, its conditions cannot be left to the consent of the contracting parties, nor should the propagation of the species be the sole end in view.

It is mere sophistry, to instance the analogy of animals, in determining the nature of marriage. Man's double essence, of soul and body, makes the union of the sexes, with us, very different from what it is with animals. The marriage of rational creatures is not only a carnal, but a spiritual union: It is a remedy, not only for the passions of the body, but for those of the mind: It is the union of opposite temperaments, each acting on the other, to the correction and improvement of both: It is a means to effect its great end, the perfection of the soul in Love. Nature itself provides for these effects; and Religion but sanctifies the means to the end. The propagation of the species is the only end of the union of animals: It is but a subordinate end of marriage. The conditions of marriage must, therefore, be otherwise determined, than by reference to this end alone.

Polygamy is essentially repugnant to Christian Marriage, and so is Divorce, except for adultery: Both are quite as inconsistent with the ends of marriage, as a Civil Contract; and this Hume shows a little further on.—ED.

we find, that, in different times and places, they impose different conditions on this important contract. In Tonquin, it is usual for the sailors, when the ship comes into the harbour, to marry for the season; and, notwithstanding this precarious engagement, they are assured, it is said, of the strictest fidelity to their bed, as well as in the whole management of their affairs, from those temporary spouses.

I cannot, at present, recollect my authorities; but I have somewhere read, that the republic of Athens, having lost many of its citizens by war and pestilence, allowed every man to marry two wives, in order the sooner to repair the waste which had been made by these calamities. The poet Euripides happened to be coupled to two noisy Vixens, who so plagued him with their jealousies and quarrels, that he became ever after a professed *woman-hater*; and is the only theatrical writer, perhaps the only poet, that ever entertained an aversion to the sex.

In that agreeable romance, called the *History of the Sevarambians*, where a great many men and a few women are supposed to be shipwrecked on a desert coast; the captain of the troop, in order to obviate those endless quarrels which arose, regulates their marriages after the following manner: He takes a handsome female to himself alone; assigns one to every couple of inferior officers, and to five of the lowest rank, he gave one wife in common.

The ancient Britons had a singular kind of marriage, to be met with among no other people. Any number of them, as ten or a dozen, joined in a society together, which was perhaps requisite for mutual defence in those barbarous times. In order to link this society the closer, they took an equal number of wives in common; and whatever children were born, were reputed to belong to all of them, and were accordingly provided for by the whole community.

Among the inferior creatures, nature herself, being the supreme legislator, prescribes all the laws which regulate their marriages, and varies those laws according to the different circumstances of the creature. Where she furnishes, with ease, food and defence to the new-born animal, the present embrace terminates the marriage; and the care of the offspring is committed entirely to the female. Where the food is of more difficult purchase, the marriage continues for one season, till the common progeny can provide for itself; and then the union immediately dissolves, and leaves each of the parties free to enter into a new engagement at the ensuing season. But nature, having endowed man with reason, has not so exactly regulated every article of his marriage-contract, but has left him to adjust them, by his own prudence, according to his particular circumstances and situation. Municipal laws are



a supply to the wisdom of each individual; and, at the same time, by restraining the natural liberty of men, make private interest submit to the interest of the public. All regulations, therefore, on this head, are equally lawful, and equally conformable to the principles of nature; though they are not all equally convenient, or equally useful to society. The laws may allow of polygamy, as among the *Eastern* nations; or of voluntary divorces, as among the Greeks and Romans; or they may confine one man to one woman, during the whole course of their lives, as among the modern Europeans. It may not be disagreeable to consider the advantages and disadvantages which result from each of these institutions.

The advocates for polygamy may recommend it as the only effectual remedy for the disorders of love, and the only expedient for freeing men from that slavery to the females, which the natural violence of our passions has imposed upon us. By this means alone can we regain our right of sovereignty; and, satiating our appetite, re-establish the authority of reason in our minds, and of consequence, our own authority in our families. Man, like a weak sovereign, being unable to support himself against the wiles and intrigues of his subjects, must play one faction against another, and become absolute by the mutual jealousy of the females. *To divide and to govern* is an universal maxim; and by neglecting it, the Europeans undergo a more grievous and a more ignominious slavery than the Turks or Persians, who are subjected indeed to a sovereign, that lies at distance from them, but in their domestic affairs rule with an uncontrollable sway.

On the other hand, it may be urged with better reason, that this sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation; and destroys that nearness of rank, not to say equality, which nature has established between the sexes. We are, by nature, their lovers, their friends, their patrons: Would we willingly exchange such endearing appellations for the barbarous title of master and tyrant?

In what capacity shall we gain by this inhuman proceeding? As lovers, or as husbands? The *lover* is totally annihilated; and courtship, the most agreeable scene in life, can no longer have place, where women have not the free disposal of themselves, but are bought and sold, like the meanest animal. The *husband* is as little a gainer, having found the admirable secret of extinguishing every part of love, except its jealousy. No rose without its thorn; but he must be a foolish wretch indeed, that throws away the rose and preserves only the thorn.

But the Asiatic manners are as destructive to friendship as to love. Jealousy excludes men from all intimacies and familiarities with each other. No one dares bring his friend to his house or

table, lest he bring a lover to his numerous wives. Hence, all over the East, each family is as much separate from another, as if they were so many distinct kingdoms. No wonder then that Solomon, living like an eastern prince, with his seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, without one friend, could write so pathetically concerning the vanity of the world. Had he tried the secret of one wife or mistress, a few friends, and a great many companions, he might have found life somewhat more agreeable.\* Destroy love and friendship, what remains in the world worth accepting?

The bad education of children, especially children of condition, is another unavoidable consequence of these eastern institutions. Those who pass the early part of life among slaves, are only qualified to be, themselves, slaves and tyrants; and in every future intercourse, either with their inferiors or superiors, are apt to forget the natural equality of mankind. What attention, too, can it be supposed a parent, whose seraglio affords him fifty sons, will give to instilling principles of morality or science into a progeny, with whom he himself is scarcely acquainted, and whom he loves with so divided an affection? Barbarism, therefore, appears, from reason as well as experience, to be the inseparable attendant of polygamy.

To render polygamy more odious, I need not recount the frightful effects of jealousy, and the constraint in which it holds the fair sex all over the East. In those countries, men are not allowed to have any commerce with the females, not even physicians, when sickness may be supposed to have extinguished all wanton passions in the bosoms of the fair, and, at the same time, has rendered them unfit objects of desire. Tournefort tells us, that when he was brought into the *Grand Seignior's* Seraglio as a physician, he was not a little surprised, in looking along a gallery, to see a great number of naked arms standing out from the sides of the room. He could not imagine what this could mean; till he was told that those arms belonged to bodies, which he must cure, without knowing any more about them than what he could learn from the arms. He was not allowed to ask a question of the patient, or even of her attendants, lest he might find it necessary to inquire concerning circumstances which the delicacy of the Seraglio allows not to be revealed. Hence physicians in the East pretend to know all diseases from the pulse; as our quacks in Europe undertake to cure a person merely from

\* And yet thousands, who have tried this secret of happiness, have confessed, with Solomon, that earthly pursuits are, after all, but vanity and vexation of spirit. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good?" And the experience of ages shows, that this good, "our beings end and aim," is not to be found in the world; which, with all its appliances and means to boot, still leaves the thirst for happiness unalaked. This is what Solomon affirms; and who can seriously dispute it?—ED.

seeing his water. I suppose, had Monsieur Tournefort been of this latter kind, he would not, in Constantinople, have been allowed by the jealous Turks, to be furnished with materials requisite for exercising his art.

In another country, where polygamy is also allowed, they render their wives cripples, and make their feet of no use to them, in order to confine them to their own houses. But it will, perhaps, appear strange, that, in a European country, jealousy can yet be carried to such a height, that it is indecent so much as to suppose that a woman of rank can have feet or legs. Witness the following story, which we have from very good authority\*. When the mother of the late king of Spain was on her road towards Madrid, she passed through a little town in Spain famous for its manufactory of gloves and stockings. The magistrates of the place thought they could not better express their duty for the reception of their new queen, than by presenting her with a sample of those commodities, for which alone their town was remarkable. The *major domo*, who conducted the princess, received the gloves very graciously; but, when the stockings were presented, he flung them away with great indignation, and severely reprimanded the magistrates for this egregious piece of indecency. *Know*, says he, *that a queen of Spain has no legs*. The young queen, who at that time understood the language but imperfectly, and had often been frightened with stories of Spanish jealousy, imagined that they were to cut off her legs. Upon which she fell a-crying, and begged them to conduct her back to Germany, for that she never could endure the operation; and it was with some difficulty they could appease her. Philip IV. is said never in his life to have laughed heartily but at the recital of this story.

Having rejected polygamy, and matched one man with one woman, let us now consider what duration we shall assign to their union, and whether we shall admit of those voluntary divorces which were customary among the Greeks and Romans. Those who would defend this practice, may employ the following reasons.

How often does disgust and aversion arise, after marriage, from the most trivial accidents, or from an incompatibility of humour; where time, instead of curing the wounds, proceeding from mutual injuries, festers them every day the more, by new quarrels and reproaches? Let us separate hearts which were not made to associate together. Either of them may, perhaps, find another for which it is better fitted. At least, nothing can be more cruel than to preserve, by violence, an union, which, at first, was made by mutual love, and is now, in effect, dissolved by mutual hatred.

\* *Mémoires de la cour d'Espagne, par Madame d'Aunoy.*

But the liberty of divorces is not only a cure to hatred and domestic quarrels: It is also an admirable preservative against them; and the only secret for keeping alive that love which first united the married couple. The heart of man delights in liberty: The very image of constraint is grievous to it: When you would confine it by violence, to what would otherwise have been its choice, the inclination immediately changes, and desire is turned into aversion. If the public interest will not allow us to enjoy in polygamy that *variety* which is so agreeable in love; at least, deprive us not of that liberty which is so essentially requisite. In vain you tell me, that I had my choice of the person with whom I would conjoin myself. I had my choice, it is true, of my prison; but this is but a small comfort, since it must still be a prison.

Such are the arguments which may be urged in favour of divorces: But there seem to be these three unanswerable objections against them. *First*, What must become of the children upon the separation of the parents? Must they be committed to the care of a stepmother; and instead of the fond attention and concern of a parent, feel all the indifference or hatred of a stranger, or an enemy? These inconveniences are sufficiently felt, where nature has made the divorce by the doom inevitable to all mortals: And shall we seek to multiply those inconveniences by multiplying divorces, and putting it in the power of parents, upon every caprice, to render their posterity miserable?

*Secondly*, If it be true, on the one hand, that the heart of man naturally delights in liberty, and hates every thing to which it is confined; it is also true, on the other, that the heart of man naturally submits to necessity, and soon loses an inclination, when there appears an absolute impossibility of gratifying it. These principles of human nature, you'll say, are contradictory: But what is man but a heap of contradictions! Though it is remarkable, that where principles are, after this manner, contrary in their operation, they do not always destroy each other; but the one or the other may predominate on any particular occasion, according as circumstances are more, or less favourable to it. For instance, love is a restless and impatient passion, full of caprices and variations; arising in a moment from a feature, from an air, from nothing, and suddenly extinguishing after the same manner. Such a passion requires liberty above all things; and therefore Eloisa had reason, when, in order to preserve this passion, she refused to marry her beloved Abelard.

How oft, when pressed to marriage, have I said,  
Curse on all laws but those which love has made:  
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,  
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

But *friendship* is a calm and sedate affection, conducted by

reason and cemented by habit; springing from long acquaintance and mutual obligations; without jealousies or fears, and without those feverish fits of heat and cold, which cause such an agreeable torment in the amorous passion. So sober an affection, therefore, as friendship, rather thrives under constraint; and never rises to such a height, as when any strong interest or necessity binds two person together, and gives them some common object of pursuit. We need not, therefore, be afraid of drawing the marriage-knot, which chiefly subsists by friendship, the closest possible. The amity between the persons, where it is solid and sincere, will rather gain by it: And where it is wavering and uncertain, this is the best expedient for fixing it. How many frivolous quarrels and disgusts are there, which people of common prudence endeavour to forget, when they lie under a necessity of passing their lives together; but which would soon be inflamed into the most deadly hatred, were they pursued to the utmost, under the prospect of an easy separation?

In the *third* place, We must consider, that nothing is more dangerous than to unite two persons so closely in all their interests and concerns, as man and wife, without rendering the union entire and total. The least possibility of a separate interest must be the source of endless quarrels and suspicions. The wife, not secure of her establishment, will still be driving some separate end or project; and the husband's selfishness, being accompanied with more power, may be still more dangerous.

Should these reasons against voluntary divorces be deemed insufficient, I hope nobody will pretend to refuse the testimony of experience. At the time when divorces were most frequent among the Romans, marriages were most rare; and Augustus was obliged, by penal laws, to force men of fashion into the married state: A circumstance which is scarcely to be found in any other age or nation. The more ancient laws of Rome, which prohibited divorces, are extremely praised by Dionysius Halycarnassæus\*. Wonderful was the harmony, says the historian, which this inseparable union of interests produced between married persons; while each of them considered the inevitable necessity by which they were linked together, and abandoned all prospect of any other choice or establishment.

The exclusion of polygamy and divorces sufficiently recommends our present European practice with regard to marriage.

---

\* Lib. ii.

## ESSAY XXXVII.

## ON THE GENUINENESS OF OSSIAN'S POEMS.

I THINK the fate of this production the most curious effect of prejudice, where superstition had no share, that ever was in the world. A tiresome, insipid performance; which, if it had been presented in its real form, as the work of a contemporary, an obscure Highlander, no man could ever have had the patience to have once perused, has, by passing for the poetry of a royal bard, who flourished fifteen centuries ago, been universally read, has been pretty generally admired, and has been translated, in prose and verse, into several languages of Europe. Even the style of the supposed English translation has been admired, though harsh and absurd in the highest degree; jumping perpetually from verse to prose, and from prose to verse; and running, most of it, in the light cadence and measure of Molly Mog. Such is the Erse epic, which has been puffed with a zeal and enthusiasm that has drawn a ridicule on my countrymen. .

But, to cut off at once the whole source of its reputation, I shall collect a few very obvious arguments against the notion of its great antiquity, with which so many people have been intoxicated, and which alone made it worthy of any attention.

(1.) The very manner in which it was presented to the public, forms a strong presumption against its authenticity. The pretended translator goes on a mission to the Highlands, to recover and collect a work, which, he affirmed, was dispersed, in fragments, among the natives. He returns, and gives a quarto volume, and then another quarto, with the same unsupported assurance, as if it were a translation of the Orlando Furioso, or Lusiade, or any poem the best known in Europe. It might have been expected, at least, that he would have told the public, and the subscribers to his mission, and the purchasers of his book, *This part I got from such a person, in such a place; that other part, from such another person. I was enabled to correct my first copy of such a passage, by the recital of such another person; a fourth supplied such a defect in my first copy* By such a history of his gradual discoveries, he would have given some face of probability to them. Any man of common sense, who was in earnest, must, in this case, have seen the peculiar necessity of such a precaution: Any man that had regard to his own character, would have anxiously followed so obvious and easy a method. All the friends of the pretended translator exhorted and entreated him to give them and the public this satisfaction. No! Those who could doubt his veracity were fools, whom it was not worth while to satisfy. The most incredible of all facts was to be taken on his word,

whom nobody knew; and an experiment was to be made, I suppose in jest, how far the credulity of the public would give way to assurance, and dogmatical affirmation.

(2.) But, to show the utter incredibility of the fact, let these following considerations be weighed, or, rather, simply reflected on; for it seems ridiculous to weigh them. Consider the size of these poems. What is given us is asserted to be only a part of a much greater collection; yet, even these pieces amount to two quartos. And they were composed, you say, in the Highlands, about fifteen centuries ago; and have been faithfully transmitted, ever since, by oral tradition, through ages totally ignorant of letters, by the rudest, perhaps, of all the European nations, the most necessitous, the most turbulent, the most ferocious, and the most unsettled. Did ever any event happen that approached within a hundred degrees of this mighty wonder, even to the nations the most fortunate in their climate and situation? Can a ballad be shown that has passed, uncorrupted, by oral tradition, through three generations, among the Greeks, or Italians, or Phœnicians, or Egyptians, or even among the natives of such countries as Otaheite, or Malacca, who seem exempted by nature from all attention but to amusement, to poetry, and music?

But the Celtic nations, it is said, had peculiar advantages for preserving their traditional poetry. The Irish, the Welsh, the Bretons, are all Celtic nations, far more likely than the Highlanders, from their soil, and climate, and situation, to have leisure for these amusements. They, accordingly, present us not with complete epic and historical poems, (for they never had the assurance to go that length;) but with very copious and circumstantial traditions, which are allowed, by all men of sense, to be scandalous and ridiculous impostures.

(3.) The style and genius of these pretended poems, are another sufficient proof of the imposition. The Lapland and Runic odes, that have come down to us, besides their small compass, have a savage rudeness, and sometimes grandeur, suited to those ages. But this Erse poetry has an insipid correctness, and regularity, and uniformity, which betrays a man without genius, that has been acquainted with the productions of civilized nations, and had his imagination so limited to that tract, that it was impossible for him even to mimic the character which he pretended to assume.

The manners are a still more striking proof of their want of authenticity. We see nothing but the affected generosity and gallantry of chivalry, which are quite unknown, not only to all savage people, but to every nation not trained in these artificial modes of thinking. In Homer, for instance, and Virgil, and Ariosto, the heroes are represented as making a nocturnal incur-

sion into the camp of the enemy. Homer and Virgil, who certainly were educated in much more civilized ages than that of Ossian, make no scruple of representing their heroes as committing undistinguished slaughter on the sleeping foe. But Orlando walks quietly through the camp of the Saracens; and scorns to kill even an infidel who cannot defend himself. Gaul and Oscar are knight-errants, still more romantic: They make a noise in the midst of the enemy's camp, that they may waken them, and thereby have a right to fight with them and to kill them. Nay, Fingal carries his ideas of chivalry still farther; much beyond what was ever dreamt of by Amadis de Gaul or Lancelot de Lake. When his territory is invaded, he scorns to repel the enemy with his whole force; he sends only an equal number against them, under an inferior captain: When these are repulsed, he sends a second detachment; and it is not till after a double defeat, that he deigns himself to descend from the hill, where he had remained all the while, an idle spectator, and to attack the enemy. Fingal and Swaran combat each other all day, with the greatest fury: When darkness suspends the fight, they feast together with the greatest amity; and then renew the combat with the return of light. Are these the manners of barbarous nations, or even of people that have common sense? We may remark, that all this narrative is supposed to be given us by a contemporary poet. The facts, therefore, must be supposed entirely, or nearly, conformable to truth. The gallantry and extreme delicacy towards the women, which is found in these productions is, if possible, still more contrary to the manners of barbarians. Among all rude nations, force and courage are the predominant virtues; and the inferiority of the females, in these particulars, renders them an object of contempt, not of deference and regard.

(4.) But I derive a new argument against the antiquity of these poems, from the general tenor of the narrative. Where manners are represented in them, probability, or even possibility, are totally disregarded; but in all other respects, the events are within the course of nature,—no giants, no monsters, no magic, no incredible feats of strength or activity. Every transaction is conformable to familiar experience, and scarcely even deserves the name of wonderful. Did this ever happen in ancient and barbarous poetry? Why is this characteristic wanting, so essential to rude and ignorant ages? Ossian, you say, was singing the exploits of his contemporaries; and therefore could not falsify them in any great degree. But if this had been a restraint, your pretended Ossian had never sung the exploits of his contemporaries: He would have gone back a generation or two, which would have been sufficient to throw an entire obscurity on the events; and he would thereby have attained the marvellous, which is alone



striking to barbarians. I desire it may be observed, that manners are the only circumstances which a rude people cannot falsify ; because they have no notion of any manners beside their own : But it is easy for them to let loose their imagination, and violate the course of nature, in every other particular ; and indeed they take no pleasure in any other kind of narrative. In Ossian, nature is violated where, alone she ought to have been preserved ; and is preserved where alone she ought to have been violated.

(5.) But there is another species of the marvellous, wanting in Ossian, which is inseparable from all nations, civilized as well as barbarous, but still more, if possible, from the barbarous,—and that is religion. There is no religious sentiment in this Erse poetry. All those Celtic heroes are more complete atheists than ever were bred in the school of Epicurus. To account for this singularity, we are told that a few generations before Ossian, the people quarrelled with their Druidical priests, and having expelled them, never afterwards adopted any other species of religion. It is not quite unnatural, I own, for the people to quarrel with their priests,—as we did with ours at the Reformation ; but we attached ourselves with fresh zeal to our new preachers, and new system ; and this passion increased in proportion to our hatred of the old. But I suppose the reason of this strange absurdity in our new Erse poetry is, that the author, finding by the assumed age of his heroes, that he must have given them the Druidical religion, and not trusting to his literature (which seems indeed to be very slender) for making the representations consistent with antiquity, thought it safest to give them no religion at all ; a circumstance so wonderfully unnatural, that it is sufficient alone, if men had eyes, to detect the imposition.

(6.) The state of the Arts, as represented in those poems, is totally incompatible with the age assigned to them. We know, that the houses even of the Southern Britons, till conquered by the Romans, were nothing but huts, erected in the woods ; whereas a stately stone building is mentioned by Ossian, of which the walls remain after it is consumed with fire. The melancholy circumstance of a fox is described, who looks out at the windows ; an image, if I am not mistaken, borrowed from the Scriptures. The Caledonians, as well as the Irish, had no shipping, but currachs, or wicker boats covered with hides ; yet are they represented as passing, in great military expeditions, from the Hebrides to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden,—a most glaring absurdity ! They live entirely by hunting, and yet they muster armies, which make incursions into these countries as well as into Ireland ; though it is certain from the experience of America, that the whole Highlands would scarce subsist a hundred persons by hunting. They are totally unacquainted with fishing though that occupation first tempts all rude nations to ven-

ture on the sea. Ossian alludes to a wind or water-mill, a machine then unknown to the Greeks and Romans, according to the opinion of the best antiquaries! His barbarians, though ignorant of tillage, are well acquainted with the method of working all kinds of metals. The harp is the musical instrument of Ossian; but the bagpipe, from time immemorial; has been the instrument of the Highlanders. If ever the harp had been known among them, it would never have given place to the other barbarous discord.

*Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen.*

(7.) All the historical facts of this poem are opposed by traditions, which, if all those tales be not equally contemptible, seem to merit much more attention. The Irish Scoti are the undoubted ancestors of the present Highlanders, who are but a small colony of that ancient people. But the Irish traditions make Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, all Irishmen, and place them some centuries distant from the Erse heroes. They represent them as giants, and monsters, and enchanters, a sure mark of the considerable antiquity of these traditions. I ask the partisans of Erse poetry, since the names of these heroes have crept over to Ireland, and have become quite familiar to the natives of that country, how it happens, that not a line of this poetry, in which they are all celebrated, which, it is pretended, alone preserves their memory with our Highlanders, and which is composed by one of these heroes themselves in the Irish language, ever found its way thither? The songs and traditions of the Senachies, the genuine poetry of the Irish, carry in their rudeness and absurdity, the inseparable attendants of barbarism, a very different aspect from the insipid correctness of Ossian, where the incidents are, if you will pardon the antithesis, the most unnatural, merely because they are natural. The same observation extends to the Welsh, another Celtic nation.

(8.) The fiction of these poems is, if possible, still more palpably detected, by the great numbers of other traditions, which, the author pretends, are still fresh in the Highlands, with regard to all the personages. The poems, composed in the age of Truthil and Cormac, ancestors of Ossian, are, he says, full of complaints against the roguery and tyranny of the Druids. He talks as familiarly of the poetry of that period, as Lucian or Longinus would of the Greek poetry of the Socratic age. I suppose here is a new rich mine of poetry ready to break out upon us, if the author thinks it can turn to account: For, probably, he does not mind the danger of detection, which he has little reason to apprehend from his experience of the public credulity. But I shall venture to assert, without any reserve or further inquiry, that there is no Highlander who is not, in some degree, a man of letters, that ever so much as heard there was a Druid in the world. The margin of every page almost

of this wonderful production is supported, as he pretends, by minute oral traditions with regard to the personages. To the poem of *Dar-thul* there is prefixed a long account of the pedigree, marriages, and adventures of three brothers, *Nathos*, *Althos*, and *Ardan*, heroes that lived fifteen hundred years ago in *Argyleshire*, and whose memory, it seems, is still celebrated there and in every part of the *Highlands*. How ridiculous to advance such a pretension to the learned, who know that there is no tradition of *Alexander the Great* all over the *East*; that the *Turks*, who have heard of him from their communication with the *Greeks*, believe him to have been the captain of *Solomon's guard*; that the *Greek and Roman story*, the moment it departs from the historical ages, becomes a heap of fiction and absurdity; that *Cyrus himself*, the conqueror of the *East*, became so completely unknown, even in little more than half a century, that *Herodotus himself*, born and bred in *Asia*, within the limits of the *Persian empire*, could tell nothing of him, any more than of *Crcesus*, the contemporary of *Cyrus*, and who reigned in the neighbourhood of the historian, except the most ridiculous fables; and that the grandfather of *Hongist* and *Horsa*, the first *Saxon conquerors*, was conceived to be a *Divinity*. I suppose it is sufficiently evident, that, without the help of books and history, the very name of *Julius Cæsar* would at present be totally unknown in *Europe*. A gentleman who travelled into *Italy*, told me that, in visiting *Frescati* or *Tusculum*, his cicerone showed him the foundation and ruins of *Cicero's country house*: He asked the fellow who this *Cicero* might be,—“*Un grandissimo gigante*,” said he. •

(9.) I ask, since the memory of *Fingal* and his ancestors and descendants is still so fresh in the *Highlands*, how it happens that none of the compilers of the *Scotch fabulous history* ever laid hold of them, and inserted them in the list of our ancient monarchs; but were obliged to have recourse to direct fiction and lying to make out their genealogies? It is to be remarked, that the *Highlanders*, who are now but an inferior part of the nation, anciently composed the whole; so that no tradition of theirs could be unknown to the court, the nobility, and the whole kingdom. Where, then, have these wonderful traditions skulked during so many centuries, that they have never come to light till yesterday?—And the very names of our ancient kings are unknown; though it is pretended, that a very particular narrative of their transactions was still preserved, and universally diffused among a numerous tribe, who are the original stem of the nation. *Father Innes*, the only judicious writer that ever touched our ancient history, finds in monastic records the names, and little more than the names of kings, from *Fergus*, whom we call *Fergus the Second*, who lived long after the supposed *Fingal*; and he thence begins

the true history of the nation. He had too much good sense to give any attention to pretended traditions even of kings, much less would he have believed that the memory and adventures of every leader of banditti in every valley of the Highlands, could be circumstantially preserved by oral tradition through more than fifteen centuries.

(10.) I shall observe, that the character of the author, from all his publications, (for I shall mention nothing else,) gives us the greatest reason to suspect him of such a ludicrous imposition on the public. For to be sure, it is only ludicrous; or at most a trial of wit, like that of the sophist, who gave us Phalaris' Epistles, or of him that counterfeited Cicero's Consolation, or supplied the fragments of Petronius. These literary amusements have been very common; and unless supported by too violent asseverations, or persisted in too long, they never drew the opprobrious appellation of impostor on the author.

He writes an ancient history of Britain, which is plainly ludicrous. He gives us a long circumstantial history of the emigrations of the Belgae, the Cimbri, and the Sarmatae, so unsupported by any author of antiquity that nothing but a particular revelation could warrant it; and yet it is delivered with such seeming confidence, (for we must not think he was in earnest,) that the history of the Punic wars is not related with greater seriousness by Livy. He has even left palpable contradictions in his narrative, in order to try the faith of his readers. He tells us, for instance, that the present inhabitants of Germany have no more connexion with the Germans mentioned by Tacitus, than with the ancient inhabitants of Pelopponesus: The Saxons and Angles, in particular, were all Sarmatians, a quite different tribe from the Germans, in manners, laws, language, and customs. Yet a few pages after, when he pretends to deliver the origin of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, he professedly derives the whole account from Tacitus. All this was only an experiment to see how far the force of affirmation could impose on the credulity of the public; but it did not succeed: He was here in the open daylight of Greek and Roman erudition, not in the obscurity of his Erse poetry and traditions. Finding the style of his Ossian admired by some, he attempts a translation of Homer in the very same style. He begins and finishes, in six weeks, a work that was for ever to eclipse the translation of Pope, whom he does not even deign to mention in his preface; but this joke was still more unsuccessful: He made a shift, however, to bring the work to a second edition, where he says, that, notwithstanding all the envy of his malignant opponents, his name alone will preserve the work to a more equitable posterity!

In short, let him now take off the mask, and fairly and openly laugh at the credulity of the public, who could believe that long

Erse epics had been secretly preserved in the Highlands of Scotland, from the age of Severus till his time.

The imposition is so gross, that he may well ask the world how they could ever possibly believe him to be in earnest?

But it may reasonably be expected that I should mention the external positive evidence, which is brought by Dr. Blair to support the authenticity of these poems. I own, that this evidence, considered in itself, is very respectable, and sufficient to support any fact, that both lies within the bounds of credibility, and has not become a matter of party. But will any man pretend to bring human testimony to prove, that above twenty thousand verses have been transmitted, by tradition and memory, during more than fifteen hundred years, that is, above fifty generations, according to the ordinary course of nature? Verses, too, which have not, in their subject, any thing alluring or inviting to the people, no miracle, no wonders, no superstitions, no useful instruction; a people, too, who, during twelve centuries, at least, of that period, had no writing, no alphabet, and who, even in the other three centuries, made very little use of that imperfect alphabet for any purpose; a people who, from the miserable disadvantages of their soil and climate, were perpetually struggling with the greatest necessities of nature; who, from the imperfections of government, lived in a continual state of internal hostility; ever harassed with the incursions of neighbouring tribes, or meditating revenge and retaliation on their neighbours? Have such a people leisure to think of any poetry, except, perhaps, a miserable song or ballad, in praise of their own chieftain, or to the disparagement of his rivals?

I should be sorry to be suspected of saying any thing against the manners of the present Highlanders. I really believe that, besides their signal bravery, there is not any people in Europe, not even excepting the Swiss, who have more plain honesty and fidelity, are more capable of gratitude and attachment, than that race of men. Yet it was, no doubt, a great surprise to them to hear that, over and above their known good qualities, they were also possessed of an excellence which they never dreamt of, an elegant taste in poetry; and inherited from the most remote antiquity the finest compositions of that kind, far surpassing the popular traditional poems of any other language: No wonder they crowded to give testimony in favour of their authenticity. Most of them, no doubt, were sincere in the delusion; the same names that were to be found in their popular ballads were carefully preserved in the new publication; some incidents, too, were perhaps transferred from the one to the other; some sentiments also might be copied; and, on the whole, they were willing to believe, and still more willing to persuade others, that the whole was genuine. On such occasions, the greatest cloud of witnesses makes no manner of evi-

dence. What Jansenist was there in Paris, which contains several thousands, that would not have given evidence for the miracles of Abbé Paris? The miracle is greater, but not the evidence, with regard to the authenticity of Ossian.

The late President Forbes was a great believer in the second sight; and I make no question but he could, on a month's warning, have overpowered you with evidence in its favour. But as finite added to finite never approaches a hair's breadth nearer to infinite; so a fact incredible in itself, acquires not the smallest accession of probability by the accumulation of testimony.

The only real wonder in the whole affair is, that a person of so fine a taste as Dr. Blair, should be so great an admirer of these productions; and one of so clear and cool a judgment collect evidence of their authenticity.

## ESSAY XXXVIII.

### OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY.

MORAL philosophy, or the science of human nature, may be treated after two different manners; each of which has its peculiar merit, and may contribute to the entertainment, instruction, and reformation of mankind. The one considers man chiefly as born for action; and as influenced in his measures by taste and sentiment; pursuing one object, and avoiding another, according to the value which these objects seem to possess, and according to the light in which they present themselves. As virtue, of all objects, is allowed to be the most valuable, this species of philosophers paint her in the most amiable colours; borrowing all helps from poetry and eloquence, and treating their subject in an easy and obvious manner, and such as is best fitted to please the imagination, and engage the affections. They select the most striking observations and instances from common life; place opposite characters in a proper contrast; and alluring us into the paths of virtue by the views of glory and happiness, direct our steps in these paths by the soundest precepts and most illustrious examples. They make us feel the difference between vice and virtue; they excite and regulate our sentiments; and so they can but bend our hearts to the love of probity and true honour, they think that they have fully attained the end of all their labours.

The other species of philosophers consider man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being, and endeavour to form his understanding more than cultivate his manners. They regard human nature as a subject of speculation; and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to find those principles

which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments, and make us approve or blame any particular object, action, or behaviour. They think it a reproach to all literature, that philosophy should not yet have fixed, beyond controversy, the foundation of morals, reasoning, and criticism; and should for ever talk of truth and falsehood, vice and virtue, beauty and deformity, without being able to determine the source of those distinctions. While they attempt this arduous task, they are deterred by no difficulties; but proceeding from particular instances to general principles, they still push on their inquiries to principles more general, and rest not satisfied till they arrive at those original principles; by which, in every science, all human curiosity must be bounded. Though their speculations seem abstract, and even unintelligible to common readers, they aim at the approbation of the learned and the wise; and think themselves sufficiently compensated for the labour of their whole lives, if they can discover some hidden truths, which may contribute to the instruction of posterity.

It is certain that the easy and obvious philosophy will always, with the generality of mankind, have the preference above the accurate and abstruse; and by many will be recommended, not only as more agreeable, but more useful, than the other. It enters more into common life; moulds the heart and affections; and, by touching those principles which actuate men, reforms their conduct, and brings them nearer to that model of perfection which it describes. On the contrary, the abstruse philosophy, being founded on a turn of mind which cannot enter into business and action, vanishes when the philosopher leaves the shade and comes into open day; nor can its principles easily retain any influence over our conduct and behaviour. The feelings of our heart, the agitation of our passions, the vehemence of our affections, dissipate all its conclusions, and reduce the profound philosopher to a mere plebeian.

This also must be confessed, that the most durable, as well as justest fame, has been acquired by the easy philosophy; and that abstract reasoners seem hitherto to have enjoyed only a momentary reputation, from the caprice or ignorance of their own age, but have not been able to support their renown with more equitable posterity. It is easy for a profound philosopher to commit a mistake in his subtle reasonings; and one mistake is the necessary parent of another, while he pushes on his consequences, and is not deterred from embracing any conclusion, by its unusual appearance, or its contradiction to popular opinion. But a philosopher, who purposes only to represent the common sense of mankind in more beautiful and more engaging colours, if by accident he falls into error, goes no farther; but renewing his

appeal to common sense, and the natural sentiments of the mind, returns into the right path, and secures himself from any dangerous illusions. The fame of Cicero flourishes at present; but that of Aristotle is utterly decayed. La Bruyere passes the seas, and still maintains his reputation; but the glory of Malebranche is confined to his own nation, and to his own age. And Addison; perhaps, will be read with pleasure, when Locke shall be entirely forgotten.

The mere philosopher is a character which is commonly but little acceptable in the world, as being supposed to contribute nothing either to the advantage or pleasure of society, while he lives remote from communication with mankind, and is wrapped up in principles and notions equally remote from their comprehension. On the other hand, the mere ignorant is still more despised; nor is any thing deemed a surer sign of an illiberal genius, in an age and nation where the sciences flourish, than to be entirely destitute of all relish for those noble entertainments. The most perfect character is supposed to lie between those extremes; retaining an equal ability and taste for books, company, and business; preserving in conversation the discernment and delicacy which arise from polite letters; and, in business, that probity and accuracy which are the natural result of a just philosophy. In order to diffuse and cultivate so accomplished a character, nothing can be more useful than compositions of the easy style and manner, which draw not too much from life, require no deep application or retreat to be comprehended, and send back the student among mankind, full of noble sentiments and wise precepts, applicable to every exigence of human life. By means of such compositions, virtue becomes amiable, science agreeable, company instructive, and retirement entertaining.

Man is a reasonable being; and, as such, receives from science his proper food and nourishment: But so narrow are the bounds of human understanding, that little satisfaction can be hoped for, in this particular, either from the extent or security of his acquisitions. Man is a sociable, no less than a reasonable being: But neither can he always enjoy company agreeable and amusing, or preserve the proper relish for them. Man is also an active being; and, from that disposition, as well as from the various necessities of human life, must submit to business and occupation: But the mind requires some relaxation, and cannot always support its bent to care and industry. It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race, and secretly admonished them to allow none of these biases to draw too much, so as to incapacitate them for other occupations and entertainments. Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a



direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher : But, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.

Were the generality of mankind contented to prefer the easy philosophy to the abstract and profound, without throwing any blame or contempt on the latter, it might not be improper, perhaps, to comply with this general opinion ; and allow every man to enjoy, without opposition, his own taste and sentiment. But as the matter is often carried farther, even to the absolute rejecting of all profound reasonings, or what is commonly called *metaphysics*, we shall now proceed to consider what can reasonably be pleaded in their behalf.

We may begin with observing, that one considerable advantage which results from the accurate and abstract philosophy, is its subserviency to the easy and humane ; which, without the former, can never attain a sufficient degree of exactness in its sentiments, precepts, or reasonings. All polite letters are nothing but pictures of human life, in various attitudes and situations ; and inspire us with different sentiments of praise or blame, admiration or ridicule, according to the qualities of the object which they set before us. An artist must be better qualified to succeed in this undertaking, who, besides a delicate taste and a quick apprehension, possesses an accurate knowledge of the internal fabric, the operations of the understanding, the workings of the passions, and the various species of sentiment which discriminate vice and virtue. How painful soever this inward search or inquiry may appear, it becomes in some measure requisite to those who would describe with success the obvious and outward appearances of life and manners. The anatomist presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects, but his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or an Helen. While the latter employs all the richest colours of his art, and gives his figures the most graceful and engaging airs, he must still carry his attention to the inward structure of the human body, the position of the muscles, the fabric of the bones, and the use and figure of every part or organ. Accuracy is, in every case, advantageous to beauty, and just reasoning to delicate sentiment. In vain would we exalt the one by depreciating the other.

Besides ; we may observe, in every art or profession, even those which most concern life or action, that a spirit of accuracy, however acquired, carries all of them nearer their perfection, and renders

them more subservient to the interests of society; And though a philosopher may live remote from business, the genius of philosophy, if carefully cultivated by several, must gradually diffuse itself throughout the whole society, and bestow a similar correctness on every art or calling. The politician will acquire greater foresight and subtilty in the subdividing and balancing of power; the lawyer more method and finer principles in his reasonings; and the general more regularity in his discipline, and more caution in his plans and operations. The stability of modern governments above the ancient, and the accuracy of modern philosophy, have improved, and probably will still improve by similar gradations.

Were there no advantage to be reaped from these studies beyond the gratification of an innocent curiosity, yet ought not even this to be despised, as being an accession to those few safe and harmless pleasures which are bestowed on the human race. The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of science and learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind. And though these researches may appear painful and fatiguing, it is with some minds, as with some bodies, which, being endowed with vigorous and florid health, require severe exercise, and reap a pleasure from what, to the generality of mankind, may seem burdensome and laborious. Obscurity, indeed, is painful to the mind as well as to the eye; but, to bring light from obscurity, by whatever labour, must needs be delightful and rejoicing.

But this obscurity, in the profound and abstract philosophy, is objected to, not only as painful and fatiguing, but as the inevitable source of uncertainty and error. Here, indeed, lies the justest and most plausible objection against a considerable part of metaphysics, that they are not properly a science, but arise, either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these entangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness. Chased from the open country, these robbers fly into the forest, and lie in wait to break in upon every unguarded avenue of the mind, and overwhelm it with religious fears and prejudices. The stoutest antagonist, if he remit his watch a moment, is oppressed; and many, through cowardice and folly, open the gates to the enemies, and willingly receive them with reverence and submission as their legal sovereigns.

But is this a sufficient reason why philosophers should desist from such researches, and leave superstition still in possession

of her retreat? Is it not proper to draw an opposite conclusion, and perceive the necessity of carrying the war into the most secret recesses of the enemy? In vain do we hope, that men, from frequent disappointment, will at last abandon such airy sciences, and discover the proper province of human reason; for, besides that many persons find too sensible an interest in perpetually recalling such topics, besides this, I say, the motive of blind despair can never reasonably have place in the sciences; since, however unsuccessful former attempts may have proved, there is still room to hope, that the industry, good fortune, or improved sagacity of succeeding generations, may reach discoveries unknown to former ages. Each adventurous genius will still leap at the arduous prize, and find himself stimulated, rather than discouraged, by the failures of his predecessors; while he, hopes that the glory of achieving so hard an adventure is reserved for him alone. The only method of freeing learning at once from these abstruse questions, is to inquire seriously into the nature of the human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after; and must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterated. Indolence, which to some persons affords a safeguard against this deceitful philosophy, is, with others, overbalanced by curiosity; and despair, which at some moments prevails, may give place afterwards to sanguine hopes and expectations. Accurate and just reasoning is the only catholic remedy fitted for all persons and all dispositions; and is alone able to subvert that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which, being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom.

Besides this advantage of rejecting, after deliberate inquiry, the most uncertain and disagreeable part of learning, there are many positive advantages, which result from an accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties of human nature. It is remarkable, concerning the operations of the mind, that though most intimately present to us, yet whenever they become the object of reflection, they seem involved in obscurity; nor can the eye readily find those lines and boundaries which discriminate and distinguish them. The objects are too fine to remain long in the same aspect or situation; and must be apprehended in an instant, by a superior penetration, derived from nature, and improved by habit and reflection. It becomes, therefore, no inconsiderable part of science, barely to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under

their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming disorder, in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflection and inquiry. This task of ordering and distinguishing, which has no merit, when performed with regard to external bodies, the objects of our senses, rises in its value, when directed towards the operations of the mind, in proportion to the difficulty and labour which we meet with in performing it. And if we can go no farther than this mental geography, or delineation, of the distinct parts and powers of the mind, it is at least a satisfaction to go so far; and the more obvious this science may appear, (and it is by no means obvious), the more contemptible still must the ignorance of it be esteemed, in all pretenders to learning and philosophy.

Nor can there remain any suspicion, that this science is uncertain and chimerical; unless we should entertain such a scepticism as is entirely subversive of all speculation, and even action. It cannot be doubted that the mind is endowed with several powers and faculties, that these powers are distinct from each other, that what is really distinct to the immediate perception may be distinguished by reflection; and consequently, that there is a truth and falsehood in all propositions on this subject, and a truth and falsehood which lie not beyond the compass of human understanding. There are many obvious distinctions of this kind, such as those between the Will and Understanding, the Imagination and Passions, which fall within the comprehension of every human creature; and the finer and more philosophical distinctions are no less real and certain, though more difficult to be comprehended. Some instances, especially late ones, of success in these inquiries, may give us a juster notion of the certainty and solidity of this branch of learning. And shall we esteem it worthy the labour of a philosopher to give us a true system of the planets, and adjust the position and order of those remote bodies; while we affect to overlook those who, with so much success, delineate the parts of the mind, in which we are so intimately concerned?

But may we not hope that philosophy, if cultivated with care, and encouraged by the attention of the public, may carry its researches still farther, and discover, at least in some degree, the secret springs and principles by which the human mind is actuated in its operation? Astronomers had long contented themselves with proving, from the phenomena, the true motions, order, and magnitude of the heavenly bodies; till a philosopher, at last, arose, who seems, from the happiest reasoning, to have also determined the laws and forces, by which the revolutions of the planets are governed and directed. The like has been performed with regard to other parts of nature: And there is no

reason to despair of equal success in our inquiries concerning the mental powers and economy, if prosecuted with equal capacity and caution. It is probable, that one operation and principle of the mind depends on another; which, again, may be resolved into one more general and universal: And how far these researches may possibly be carried, it will be difficult for us, before, or even after a careful trial, exactly to determine. This is certain, that attempts of this kind are every day made even by those who philosophize the most negligently: And nothing can be more requisite than to enter upon the enterprise with thorough care and attention; that, if it lie within the compass of human understanding, it may at last be happily achieved; if not, it may, however, be rejected with some confidence and security. This last conclusion, surely, is not desirable; nor ought it to be embraced too rashly. For how much must we diminish from the beauty and value of this species of philosophy, upon such a supposition? Moralists have hitherto been accustomed, when they considered the vast multitude and diversity of those actions that excite our approbation or dislike, to search for some common principle, on which this variety of sentiments might depend. And though they have sometimes carried the matter too far, by their passion for some one general principle; it must, however, be confessed, that they are excusable in expecting to find some general principles, into which all the vices and virtues were justly to be resolved. The like has been the endeavour of critics, logicians, and even politicians: Nor have their attempts been wholly unsuccessful; though perhaps longer time, greater accuracy, and more ardent application, may bring these sciences still nearer their perfection. To throw up at once all pretensions of this kind, may justly be deemed more rash, precipitate, and dogmatical, than even the boldest and most affirmative philosophy, that has ever attempted to impose its crude dictates and principles on mankind.

What though these reasonings concerning human nature seem abstract, and of difficult comprehension, this affords no presumption of their falsehood. On the contrary, it seems impossible that what has hitherto escaped so many wise and profound philosophers, can be very obvious and easy. And whatever pains these researches may cost us, we may think ourselves sufficiently rewarded, not only in point of profit but of pleasure, if, by that means, we can make any addition to our stock of knowledge, in subjects of such unspeakable importance.

But as, after all, the abstractedness of these speculations is no recommendation, but rather a disadvantage to them, and as this difficulty may perhaps be surmounted by care and art, and the avoiding of all unnecessary detail, the Philosopher should sedulously attempt to throw some light upon subjects, from which

uncertainty has hitherto deterred the wise, and obscurity the ignorant. Happy, if he can unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound inquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty! And still more happy, if reasoning in this easy manner, he can undermine the foundations of an abstruse philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served only as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error!\*

## ESSAY XXXIX.

### OF THE ORIGIN OF IDEAS.

Every one will readily allow, that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind, when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth; and when he afterwards recalls to his memory this sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination. These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment. The utmost we say of them, even when they operate with the greatest vigour, is, that they represent their object in so lively a manner, that we could *almost* say we feel or see it: But, except the mind be disordered by disease or madness, they never can arrive at such a pitch of vivacity, as to render these perceptions altogether undistinguishable. All the colours of poetry, however splendid, can never paint natural objects in such a manner as to make the description be taken for a real landscape. The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation.

\* "We are not to look in Mr. Hume's treatise for any regular or connected system. It is neither a scheme of Materialism, nor a scheme of Spiritualism, for his reasonings strike equally at the root of both those theories. His aim is to establish a universal *scepticism*, and to produce in the reader a complete distrust in his own faculties. For this purpose he avails himself of the data assumed by the most opposite sects, shifting his ground skillfully from one position to another, as best suits the scope of his present argument. With the fundamental principle of the Cascoondists, of the origin of ideas, Hume combined the logical method of the Cartesianes and a strong leaning to the idealism of Malebranche and of Berkeley. These philosophers attempted to show that the existence of the material world was impossible. The Egoists doubted of everything but their own existence, and held the proposition *cogito, ergo sum* to be the only truth. Hume denied even this proposition, and denying the existence of the thinking percipient, I, commonly called *mind*, admitted only the existence of *impressions* and *ideas*. With the single exception of Bayle, he has carried this sceptical mode of reasoning further than any other modern philosopher. Cicero, who himself belonged nominally to the same school, seems to have thought that the controversial habits imposed on the Academical sect, by their profession of universal doubt, required a greater versatility of talent, and fertility of invention, than were necessary for defending any particular system of tenets, (Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* L. I. V.) and it is not improbable that Mr. Hume, in the pride of youthful genius, was misled by this specious but fallacious idea. On the other hand, Bayle has the candour to acknowledge that *nothing is so easy as to dispute after the manner of the sceptics*; and to this proposition every man of reflection will find himself more and more disposed to assent, as he advances in life. It is experience alone that can convince us, how much more difficult it is to make any real progress in the search after truth, than to acquire a talent for plausible disputation."—*From Dugald Stewart*.—ED.

We may observe a like distinction to run through all the other perceptions of the mind. A man in a fit of anger, is actuated in a very different manner from one who only thinks of that emotion. If you tell me, that any person is in love, I easily understand your meaning, and form a just conception of his situation; but never can mistake that conception for the real disorders and agitations of the passion. When we reflect on our past sentiments and affections, our thought is a faithful mirror, and copies its objects truly; but the colours which it employs are faint and dull, in comparison of those in which our original perceptions were clothed. It requires no nice discernment or metaphysical head to mark the distinction between them.

Here, therefore, we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated THOUGHTS or IDEAS. The other species want a name in our language and in most others; I suppose because it was not requisite for any but philosophical purposes, to rank them under a general term or appellation. Let us, therefore, use a little freedom, and call them IMPRESSIONS; employing that word in a sense somewhat different from the usual. By the term *impression*, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.

Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man; which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters, and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty, the thought can in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe; or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen or heard of, may yet be conceived; nor is any thing beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, *gold* and *mountain*.

*tain*, with which we were formerly acquainted. A virtuous horse\* we can conceive; because, from our own feeling, we can conceive virtue; and this we may unite to the figure and shape of a horse, which is an animal familiar to us. In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: The mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will: Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions, are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.†

To prove this, the two following arguments will, I hope, be sufficient. *First*, When we analyse our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas, which, at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this inquiry to what length we please; where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who would assert that this position is not universally true, nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression or lively perception which corresponds to it.

*Secondly*, If it happen, from a defect of the organ, that a man is not susceptible of any species of sensation, we always find that he is as little susceptible of the correspondent ideas. A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet

\* Hume's Theory makes the Essence of Virtue consist in utility.—ED.

† According to Hume, the objects of knowledge are of two classes—*Impressions* and *Ideas*. Impressions comprehend *sensations*, properly so called, and *perceptions* of sensible qualities, which are the objects of our thought when we remember or imagine, or, in general exercise any of our intellectual powers, on things which are past, present, or future. These ideas he considers to be *copies* of our *impressions*, and the words which denote them, the only *signs* entitled to attention; all others, the corresponding impressions of which cannot be pointed out, being, *ipso facto*, unmeaning and illusory. Hence *impressions* furnish, either mediately or immediately, the whole materials of thought; a conclusion that coincides exactly with the account of the origin of our ideas, borrowed by Gassendi from the ancient Epicureans.

Hume's principles were held in common by Gassendi, by Descartes and by Locke. Their unsoundness, tho' not inferred by himself, was forced upon the consideration of his successors by the extravagance of his conclusions. It is not improbable indeed, that but for the forcible display, in his speculations, of the dangerous consequences which these data necessarily involve, the errors Hume adopted from his predecessors, might have kept their ground to the present day.—Condensed from Dugald Stewart.—ED.



for the ideas ; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects. The case is the same, if the object proper for exciting any sensation has never been applied to the organ. A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine. And though there are few or no instances of a like deficiency in the mind, where a person has never felt, or is wholly incapable of a sentiment or passion that belongs to his species, yet we find the same observation to take place in a less degree. A man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate revenge or cruelty ; nor can a selfish heart easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity. It is readily allowed, that other beings may possess many senses of which we can have no conception ; because the ideas of them have never been introduced to us, in the only manner by which an idea can have access to the mind, to wit, by the actual feeling, and sensation.

There is, however, one contradictory phenomenon, which may prove, that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to arise, independent of their correspondent impressions. I believe, it will readily be allowed, that the several distinct ideas of colour, which enter by the eye, or those of sound, which are conveyed by the ear, are really different from each other, though, at the same time, resembling. Now, if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of the different shades of the same colour ; and each shade produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest. For if this should be denied, it is possible by the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it ; and if you will not allow any of the means to be different, you cannot, without absurdity, deny the extremes to be the same. Suppose, therefore, a person to have enjoyed his sight for thirty years, and to have become perfectly acquainted with colours of all kinds, except one particular shade of blue, for instance, which it never has been his fortune to meet with ; let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one, be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest, it is plain, that he will perceive a blank where that shade is wanting, and will be sensible that there is a greater distance in that place between the contiguous colours than in any other. Now I ask, whether it be possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, though it had never been conveyed to him by his senses ? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can ; and this may serve as a proof, that the simple ideas are not always, in every instance, derived from the correspondent impressions, though this instance is so singular, that it is scarcely worth our observing, and does not merit, that for it alone we should alter our general maxim.

Here, therefore, is a proposition, which not only seems in itself simple and intelligible, but if a proper use were made, of it, might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them. All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure. The mind has but a slender hold of them. They are apt to be confounded with other resembling ideas, and when we have often employed any term, though without a distinct meaning, we are apt to imagine it has a determinate idea annexed to it. On the contrary, all impressions, that is, all sensations either outward or inward, are strong and vivid. The limits between them are more exactly determined; nor is it easy to fall into any error or mistake with regard to them. When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea, (as is but too frequent,) we need but inquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion. By bringing ideas into so clear a light, we may reasonably hope to remove all dispute, which may arise concerning their nature and reality. \*

## ESSAY XL.

### OF THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

It is evident, that there is a principle of connection between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and that, in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity. In our more serious thinking or discourse, this is so observable, that any particular thought, which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas, is immediately remarked and rejected. And even in our wildest and most wandering reveries, nay, in our very dreams, we shall find, if we reflect, that the imagination ran not altogether at adventures, but that there was still a connection upheld among the different ideas which succeeded each other. Were the loosest and freest conversation to be transcribed, there would immediately be observed something which connected it in all its transitions. Or where this is wanting, the person who broke the thread of discourse might still inform you, that there had secretly revolved in his mind a succession of thought, which had gradually led him from the subject of conversation. Among different languages, even where we cannot suspect the least connection or communication, it is found, that the words expressive

\* See NOTE [T.]

of ideas the most compounded, do yet nearly correspond to each other; a certain proof that the simple ideas comprehended in the compound ones, were bound together by some universal principle, which had an equal influence on all mankind.

Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together, I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association, a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me there appear to be only three principles of connection among ideas, namely, *Resemblance*, *Contiguity* in time or place, and *Cause* or *Effect*.

That these principles serve to connect ideas will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original\*. The mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others†; and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it‡. But that this enumeration is complete, and that there are no other principles of association except these, may be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the reader, or even to a man's own satisfaction. All we can do, in such cases, is to run over several instances, and examine carefully the principle which binds the different thoughts to each other, never stopping till we render the principle as general as possible||. The more instances we examine, and the more care we employ, the more assurance shall we acquire, that the enumeration which we form from the whole is complete and entire.

## A DISSERTATION

ON

## THE PASSIONS.

1. SOME objects produce immediately an agreeable sensation, by the original structure of our organs, and are thence denominated GOOD; as others, from their immediate disagreeable sensation, acquire the appellation of EVIL. Thus, moderate warmth is agreeable and good; excessive heat, painful and evil.

Some objects again, by being naturally conformable or contrary to passion, excite an agreeable or painful sensation; and are thence called *Good* or *Evil*. The punishment of an adversary, by gratifying revenge, is good; the sickness of a companion, by affecting friendship, is evil.

\* Resemblance.

† Contiguity.

‡ Cause and Effect.

• || For instance, Contrast or Contrariety, is also a connection among ideas, but it may perhaps be considered as a mixture of *Causation* and *Resemblance*. Where two objects are contrary, the one destroys the other, that is, is the cause of its annihilation; and the idea of the annihilation of an object, implies the idea of its former existence.

2. All good or evil, whence-ever it arises, produces various passions and affections, according to the light in which it is surveyed.

When good is certain or very probable, it produces JOY. When evil is in the same situation, there arises GRIEF or SORROW.

When either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to FEAR or HOPE, according to the degree of uncertainty on one side or the other.

DESIRE arises from good, considered simply; and AVERSION from evil. The WILL exerts itself, when either the presence of the good, or absence of the evil, may be attained by any action of the mind or body.

3. None of these passions seem to contain any thing curious and remarkable, except *Hope* and *Fear*, which, being derived from the probability of any good or evil, are mixed passions that merit our attention.

Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, by which the mind is not allowed to fix on either side; but is incessantly tossed from one to another, and is determined one moment to consider an object as existent, and another moment as the contrary. The imagination or understanding, call it which you please, fluctuates between the opposite views; and though perhaps it may be oftener turned to one side than the other, it is impossible for it, by reason of the opposition of causes or chances, to rest on either. The *pro* and *con* of the question alternately prevail; and the mind, surveying the objects in their opposite causes, finds such a contrariety as destroys all certainty or established opinion.

Suppose, then, that the object, concerning which we are doubtful, produces either desire or aversion; it is evident, that according as the mind turns itself to one side or the other, it must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow. An object, whose existence we desire, gives satisfaction, when we think of those causes which produce it, and for the same reason, excites grief or uneasiness from the opposite consideration. So that, as the understanding, in probable questions, is divided between the contrary points of view, the heart must in the same manner be divided between opposite motions.

Now, if we consider the human mind, we shall observe, that with regard to the passions, it is not like a wind instrument of music, which, in running over all the notes, immediately loses the sound when the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where, after each stroke, the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays. The imagination is extremely quick and agile; but the passions, in comparison, are slow and restive. For which reason, when any

object is presented, which affords a variety of views to the one and emotions to the other; though the fancy may change its views with great celerity, each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion, but the one passion will always be mixed and confounded with the other. According as the probability inclines to good or evil, the passion of grief or joy predominates in the composition; and these passions being intermingled, by means of the contrary views of the imagination, produce by the union the passions of hope and fear.

4. As this theory seems to carry its own evidence along with it, we shall be more concise in our proofs.

The passions of fear and hope may arise when the chances are equal on both sides, and no superiority can be discovered in one above the other. Nay in this situation, the passions are rather the strongest, as the mind has then the least foundation to rest upon, and is tost with the greatest uncertainty. Throw in a superior degree of probability to the side of grief, you immediately see that passion diffuse itself over the composition, and tincture it into fear. Increase the probability, and by that means the grief; the fear prevails still more and more, till at last it runs insensibly, as the joy continually diminishes, into pure grief. After you have brought it to this situation, diminish the grief, by a contrary operation to that which increased it, to wit, by diminishing the probability on the melancholy side; and you will see the passion clear every moment, till it changes insensibly into hope; which again runs, by slow degrees, into joy, as you increase that part of the composition by the increase of the probability. Are not these as plain proofs, that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy, as in optics it is a proof, that a coloured ray of the sun, passing through a prism, is a composition of two others, when, as you diminish or increase the quantity of either, you find it prevail proportionably, more or less, in the composition?

5. Probability is of two kinds; either when the object is itself uncertain, and to be determined by chance; or when, though the object be already certain, yet it is uncertain to our judgment, which finds a number of proofs or presumptions on each side of the question. Both these kinds of probability cause fear and hope; which must proceed from that property in which they agree; namely, the uncertainty and fluctuation which they bestow on the passion, by that contrariety of views, which is common to both.

6. It is a probable good or evil which commonly causes hope or fear; because probability, producing an inconstant and wavering survey of an object, occasions naturally a like mixture and uncertainty of passion. But we may observe, that, wherever from

other causes this mixture can be produced, the passions of fear and hope will arise, even though there be no probability.

An evil, conceived as barely *possible*, sometimes produces fear especially if the evil be very great. A man cannot think on excessive pain and torture without trembling, if he runs the least risk of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is compensated by the greatness of the evil.

But even *impossible* evils cause fear; as when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, though we know ourselves to be in perfect security, and have it in our choice whether we will advance a step farther. The immediate presence of the evil influences the imagination, and produces a species of belief; but being opposed by the reflection on our security, that belief is immediately retracted, and causes the same kind of passion, as when, from a contrariety of chances, contrary passions are produced.

Evils, which are *certain*, have sometimes the same effect as the possible or impossible. A man in a strong prison, without the least means of escape, trembles at the thoughts of the rack, to which he is sentenced. The evil is here fixed in itself; but the mind has not courage to fix upon it; and this fluctuation gives rise to a passion of a similar appearance with fear.

7. But it is not only where good or evil is uncertain as to its *existence*, but also as to its *kind*, that fear or hope arises. If any one were told that one of his sons is suddenly killed; the passion, occasioned by this event, would not settle into grief, till he got certain information which of his sons he had lost. Though each side of the question produces here the same passion, that passion cannot settle, but receives from the imagination, which is unfixed, a tremulous unsteady motion, resembling the mixture and contention of grief and joy.

8. Thus all kinds of uncertainty have a strong connection with fear, even though they do not cause any opposition of passions, by the opposite views which they present to us. Should I leave a friend in any malady, I should feel more anxiety upon his account, than if he were present; though perhaps I am not only incapable of giving him assistance, but likewise of judging concerning the event of his sickness. There are a thousand little circumstances of his situation and condition which I desire to know; and the knowledge of them would prevent that fluctuation and uncertainty, so nearly allied to fear. Horace has remarked this phenomenon.

Ut assidens implumibus pullis avis  
Serpentum allapsus timet  
Magis relictis; non, ut adsit, auxili  
Laturna plus presentibus.—Horace Carminum V. Ode 1.

A virgin on her bridal-night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, though she expects nothing but pleasure. The

confusion of wishes and joys, the newness and greatness of the unknown event, so embarrass the mind, that it knows not in what image or passion to fix itself.

9. Concerning the mixture of affections, we may remark, in general, that when contrary passions arise from objects nowise connected together, they take place alternately. Thus when a man is afflicted for the loss of a lawsuit, and joyful for the birth of a son, the mind running from the agreeable to the calamitous object, with whatever celerity it may perform this motion, can scarcely temper the one affection with the other, and remain between them in a state of indifference.

It more easily attains that calm situation, when the *same* event is of a mixed nature, and contains something adverse and something prosperous in its different circumstances. For in that case, both the passions, mingling with each other by means of the relation, often become mutually destructive, and leave the mind in perfect tranquillity.

But suppose that the object is not a compound of good and evil but is considered as probable or improbable in any degree; in that case, the contrary passions will both of them be present at once in the soul, and instead of balancing and tempering each other, will subsist together, and by their union produce a third impression or affection, such as hope or fear.

The influence of the relations of ideas (which we shall explain more fully afterwards) is plainly seen in this affair. In contrary passions, if the objects be *totally different*, the passions are like two opposite liquors in different bottles, which have no influence on each other. If the objects be intimately *connected*, the passions are like an *alkali* and an *acid*, which, being mingled, destroy each other. If the relation be more imperfect, and consist in the *contradictory* views of the *same* object, the passions are like oil and vinegar, which, however mingled, never perfectly unite and incorporate.

The effect of a mixture of passions, when one of them is predominant, and swallows up the other, shall be explained afterwards.

## SECTION II.

1. BESIDES those passions above mentioned, which arise from a direct pursuit of good, and aversion to evil, there are others which are of a more complicated nature, and imply more than one view or consideration. Thus *Pride* is a certain satisfaction in ourselves, on account of some accomplishment or possession which we enjoy: *Humility*, on the other hand, is a dissatisfaction with ourselves, on account of some defect or infirmity.

*Love or Friendship* is a complacency in another, on account of his accomplishments or services: *Hatred*, the contrary.

2. In these two sets of passions, there is an obvious distinction to be made between the *object* of the passion, and its *cause*. The object of pride and humility is self: The cause of the passion is some excellence in the former case; some fault in the latter. The object of love and hatred is some other person: The causes, in like manner, are either excellences or faults.

With regard to all these passions, the causes are what excite the emotion; the object is what the mind directs its views to when the emotion is excited. Our merit, for instance, raises pride; and it is essential to pride to turn our view on ourselves with complacency and satisfaction.

Now, as the causes of these passions are very numerous and various, though their object be uniform and simple; it may be a subject of curiosity to consider what that circumstance is in which all these various causes agree; or, in other words, what is the real efficient cause of the passion. We shall begin with pride and humility.

3. In order to explain the causes of these passions, we must reflect on certain principles, which, though they have a mighty influence on every operation, both of the understanding and passions, are not commonly much insisted on by philosophers. The first of these is the *association* of ideas, or that principle by which we make an easy transition from one idea to another. However uncertain and changeable our thoughts may be, they are not entirely without rule and method in their changes. They usually pass, with regularity, from one object to what resembles it, is contiguous to it, or produced by it\*. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other, united by these relations, naturally follows it, and enters with more facility, by means of that introduction.

The *second* property, which I shall observe in the human mind, is a like association of impressions or emotions. All *resembling* impressions are connected together; and no sooner one arises, than the rest naturally follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again. In like manner, our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, courage, pride, and other resembling affections.

In the *third* place, it is observable of these two kinds of association, that they very much assist and forward each other, and that the transition is more easily made where they both concur in the same object. Thus, a man who, by an injury received

\* See Essay XL. on the Association of Ideas.



from another, is very much discomposed and ruffled in his temper, is apt to find a hundred subjects of hatred, discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions; especially if he can discover these subjects in or near the person who was the object of his first emotion. Those principles, which forward the transition of ideas, here concur with those which operate on the passions; and both, uniting in one action, bestow on the mind a double impulse.

Upon this occasion, I may cite a passage from an elegant writer, who expresses himself in the following manner\*: "As the fancy delights in every thing that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still the more pleased, the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, so it is capable of receiving new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus any continual sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of waters, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place that lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fragrantcy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together, than where they enter the mind separately; as the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of the situation." In these phenomena we may remark the association both of impressions and ideas, as well as the mutual assistance these associations lend to each other.

4. It seems to me, that both these species of relation have place, in producing *Pride or Humility*, and are the real, efficient causes of the passion.

With regard to the first relation, that of ideas, there can be no question. Whatever we are proud of must, in some manner, belong to us. It is always *our* knowledge, *our* sense, beauty, possessions, family, on which we value ourselves. Self, which is the object of the passion, must still be related to that quality or circumstance which causes the passion. There must be a connection between them; an easy transition of the imagination; or a facility of the conception in passing from one to the other. Where this connection is wanting, no object can either excite pride or humility; and the more you weaken the connection, the more you weaken the passion.

5. The only subject of inquiry is, whether there be a like relation of impressions or sentiments, wherever pride or humility is felt; whether the circumstance, which causes the passion,

\* Addison, Spectator, No. 412.

previously excites a sentiment similar to the passion ; and whether there be an easy transfusion of the one into the other.

The feeling or sentiment of pride is agreeable ; of humility, painful. An agreeable sensation is, therefore, related to the former ; a painful to the latter. And if we find, after examination, that every object which produces pride, produces also a separate pleasure ; and every object which causes humility, excites in like manner a separate uneasiness ; we must allow, in that case, that the present theory is fully proved and ascertained. The double relation of ideas and sentiments will be acknowledged incontestable.

6. To begin with personal merit and demerit, the most obvious causes of these passions ; it would be entirely foreign to our present purpose to examine the foundation of moral distinctions. It is sufficient to observe, that the foregoing theory concerning the origin of the passions may be defended on any hypothesis. The most probable system, which has been advanced to explain the difference between vice and virtue, is, that either from a primary constitution of nature, or from a sense of public or private interest, certain characters, upon the very view and contemplation, produce uneasiness ; and others, in like manner, excite pleasure. The uneasiness and satisfaction produced in the spectator, are essential to vice and virtue. To approve of a character, is to feel a delight upon its appearance : To disapprove of it, is to be sensible of an uneasiness. The pain and pleasure, therefore, being in a manner the primary source of blame or praise, must also be the causes of all their effects ; and consequently, the causes of pride and humility, which are the unavoidable attendants of that distinction.

But supposing this theory of morals should not be received ; it is still evident that pain and pleasure, if not the sources of moral distinctions, are at least inseparable from them. A generous and noble character affords a satisfaction even in the survey ; and when presented to us, though only in a poem or fable, never fails to charm and delight us. On the other hand, cruelty and treachery displease from their very nature ; nor is it possible ever to reconcile us to these qualities, either in ourselves or others. Virtue, therefore, produces always a pleasure distinct from the pride or self-satisfaction which attends it : Vice, an uneasiness separate from the humility or remorse.

But a high or low conceit of ourselves, arises not from those qualities alone of the mind, which, according to common systems of Ethics, have been defined parts of moral duty ; but from any other, which have a connection with pleasure or uneasiness. Nothing flatters our vanity more than the talent of pleasing by our wit, good humour, or any other accomplishment ; and nothing gives

us a more sensible mortification, than a disappointment in any attempt of that kind. No one has ever been able to tell precisely what *wit* is, and to show why such a system of thought must be received under that denomination, and such another rejected. It is by taste alone we can decide concerning it; nor are we possessed of any other standard by which we can form a judgement of this nature. Now what is this *taste*, from which true and false wit in a manner received their being, and without which no thought can have a title to either of these denominations? It is plainly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of disgust from false, without our being able to tell the reasons of that satisfaction or uneasiness. The power of exciting these opposite sensations is, therefore, the very essence of true or false wit; and consequently, the cause of that vanity or mortification which arises from one or the other.

7. Beauty of all kinds gives us a peculiar delight and satisfaction; as deformity produces pain, upon whatever subject it may be placed, and whether surveyed in an animate or inanimate object. If the beauty or deformity belong to our own face, shape, or person, this pleasure or uneasiness is converted into pride or humility, as having in this case all the circumstances requisite to produce a perfect transition, according to the present theory.

It would seem that the very essence of beauty consists in its power of producing pleasure. All its effects, therefore, must proceed from this circumstance: And if beauty is so universally the subject of vanity, it is only from its being the cause of pleasure.

Concerning all other bodily accomplishments, we may observe in general, that whatever in ourselves is either useful, beautiful, or surprising, is an object of pride; and the contrary of humility. These qualities agree in producing a separate pleasure; and agree in nothing else.

We are vain of the surprising adventures which we have met with, the escapes which we have made, the dangers to which we have been exposed; as well as of our surprising feats of vigour and activity. Hence the origin of vulgar lying; where men, without any interest, and merely out of vanity, heap up a number of extraordinary events, which are either the fictions of their brain, or, if true, have no connection with themselves. Their fruitful invention supplies them with a variety of adventures; and where that talent is wanting, they appropriate such as belong to others, in order to gratify their vanity: For between that passion and the sentiment of pleasure, there is always a close connection.

8. But though pride and humility have the qualities of our mind and body, that is, of self, for their natural and more immediate causes; we find by experience, that many objects produce

these affections. We found vanity upon houses, gardens, equipage, and other external objects; as well as upon personal merit and accomplishments. This happens when external objects acquire any particular relation to ourselves, and are associated or connected with us. A beautiful fish in the ocean, a well-proportioned animal in a forest, and indeed anything which neither belongs nor is related to us, has no manner of influence on our vanity; whatever extraordinary qualities it may be endowed with, and whatever degree of surprise and admiration it may naturally occasion. It must be somehow associated with us, in order to touch our pride.\* Its idea must hang, in a manner, upon that of ourselves; and the transition from one to the other must be easy and natural.

Men are vain of the beauty either of *their* country or *their* county, or even of *their* parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure. This pleasure is related to pride. The object or cause of this pleasure is, by the supposition, related to self, the object of pride. By this double relation of sentiments and ideas, a transition is made from one to the other. Men are also vain of the happy temperature of the climate in which they are born; of the fertility of their native soil; of the goodness of the wines, fruits, or victuals produced by it; of the softness or force of their language, with other particulars of that kind. These objects have plainly a reference to the pleasures of sense, and are originally considered as agreeable to the feeling, taste, or hearing. How could they become causes of pride, except by means of that transition above explained?

There are some, who discover a vanity of an opposite kind, and affect to depreciate their own country, in comparison of those to which they have travelled. These persons find, when they are at home, and surrounded with their countrymen, that the strong relation between them and their own nation, is shared with so many, that it is in a manner lost to them; whereas that distant relation to a foreign country, which is formed by their having seen it, and lived in it, is augmented by their considering how few have done the same. For this reason, they always admire the beauty, utility, and rarity of what they met with abroad, above what they find at home.

Since we can be vain of a country, climate, or any inanimate object, which bears a relation to us; it is no wonder we should be vain of the qualities of those who are connected with us by blood or friendship. Accordingly we find, that any qualities which, when belonging to ourselves, produce pride, produce also, in a less degree, the same affection, when discovered in persons related to us. The beauty, address, merit, credit, and honours of their kindred, are carefully displayed by the proud, and are considerable sources of their vanity.

As we are proud of riches in ourselves, we desire, in order to gratify our vanity, that every one who has any connection with us, should likewise be possessed of them, and are ashamed of such as are mean or poor among our friends and relations. Our forefathers being regarded as our nearest relations; every one naturally affects to be of a good family, and to be descended from a long succession of rich and honourable ancestors.

Those who boast of the antiquity of their families, are glad when they can join this circumstance, that their ancestors, for many generations, have been uninterrupted proprietors of the *same* portion of lands, and that their family has never changed its possessions, or been transplanted into any other country or province. It is an additional subject of vanity, when they can boast, that these possessions have been transmitted through a descent, composed entirely of males, and that the honours and fortune have never passed through any female. Let us endeavour to explain these phenomena from the foregoing theory.

When any one values himself on the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are not merely the extent of time and number of ancestors; for in that respect all mankind are alike, but these circumstances joined to the riches and credit of his ancestors, which are supposed to reflect a lustre on himself, upon account of his connection with them. Since therefore the passion depends on the connection, whatever strengthens the connection, must also increase the passion, and whatever weakens the connection, must diminish the passion. But it is evident, that the sameness of the possessions must strengthen the relations of ideas, arising from blood and kindred, and convey the fancy with greater facility from one generation to another; from the remotest ancestors to their posterity, who are both their heirs and their descendants. By this facility, the sentiment is transmitted more entire, and excites a greater degree of pride and vanity.

The case is the same with the transmission of the honours and fortune through a succession of males, without their passing through any female. It is an obvious quality of human nature, that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable; and where two objects are presented, a small and a great, it usually leaves the former, and dwells entirely on the latter. This is the reason why children commonly bear their father's name, and are esteemed to be of a nobler or meaner birth, according to *his* family. And though the mother should be possessed of superior qualities to the father, as often happens, the *general rule* prevails, notwithstanding the exception, according to the doctrine which shall be explained afterwards. Nay, even when a superiority of any kind is so great, or when any

other reasons have such an effect, as to make the children rather represent the mother's family than the father's, the general rule still retains an efficacy sufficient to weaken the relation, and make a kind of breach in the line of ancestors. The imagination runs not along them with the same facility, nor is able to transfer the honour and credit of the ancestors to their posterity of the same name and family so readily, as when the transition is conformable to the general rule, and passes through the male line, from father to son, or from brother to brother.

9. But *property*, as it gives us the fullest power and authority over any object, is the relation which has the greatest influence on these passions\*.

Every thing belonging to a vain man is the best that is any where to be found. His houses, equipage, furniture, clothes, horses, hounds, excel all others in his conceit; and it is easy to observe, that from the least advantage in any of these, he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you will believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table, more orderly; his servants, more expert; the air in which he lives more healthful; the soil which he cultivates, more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and to greater perfection: Such a thing is remarkable for its novelty; such another for its antiquity: This is the workmanship of a famous artist; that belonged once to such a prince or great man. All objects, in a word, which are useful, beautiful, or surprising, or are related to such, may by means of property give rise to this passion. These all agree in giving pleasure. This alone is common to them; and therefore must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect. As every new instance is a new argument, and as the instances are here without number, it would seem that this theory is sufficiently confirmed by experience.

Riches imply the power of acquiring whatever is agreeable; and as they comprehended many particular objects of vanity, they necessarily become one of the chief causes of that passion.

10. Our opinions of all kinds are strongly affected by society and sympathy, and it is almost impossible for us to support any principle of sentiment, against the universal consent of every one with whom we have any friendship or correspondence. But of all our opinions, those which we form in our own favour, however lofty or presuming, are, at bottom, the frailest and the most easily shaken by the contradiction and opposition of others. Our great concern, in this case, makes us soon alarmed; and keeps our passions upon the watch: Our consciousness of partiality still makes us dread a mistake: And the very difficulty of judging

\* See NOTE [U.]

concerning an object, which is never set at a due distance from us, nor is seen in a proper point of view, makes us hearken anxiously to the opinions of others, who are better qualified to form just opinions concerning us. Hence that strong love of fame with which all mankind are possessed. It is in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves, not from any original passion, that they seek the applauses of others. And when a man desires to be praised, it is for the same reason that a beauty is pleased with surveying herself in a favourable looking-glass, and seeing the reflection of her own charms.

Though it be difficult, in all points of speculation, to distinguish a cause, which increases an effect, from one which solely produces it; yet in the present case, the phenomena seem pretty strong and satisfactory in confirmation of the foregoing principle.

We receive a much greater satisfaction from the approbation of those whom we ourselves esteem and approve of, than of those whom we condemn and despise.

When esteem is obtained after a long and intimate acquaintance, it gratifies our vanity in a peculiar manner.

The suffrage of those who are shy, and backward in giving praise, is attended with an additional relish and enjoyment, if we can obtain it in our favour.

Where a great man is delicate in his choice of favourites, every one courts with greater earnestness his countenance and protection.

Praise never gives us much pleasure, unless it concur with our own opinion, and extol us for those qualities in which we chiefly excel.

These phenomena seem to prove, that the favourable suffrages of the world are regarded only as authorities, or as confirmations of our own opinion. And if the opinions of others have more influence in this subject than in any other, it is easily accounted for from the nature of the subject.

11. Thus, few objects, however related to us, and whatever pleasure they produce, are able to excite a great degree of pride or self-satisfaction; unless they be also obvious to others, and engage the approbation of the spectators. What disposition of mind so desirable as the peaceful, resigned, contented; which readily submits to all the dispensations of providence, and preserves a constant serenity amidst the greatest misfortunes and disappointments? Yet this disposition, though acknowledged to be a virtue or excellence, is seldom the foundation of great vanity or self applause; having no brilliancy or exterior lustre; and rather cheering the heart, than animating the behaviour and conversation. The case is the same with many other qualities of the mind, body, or fortune; and this circumstance, as well as the

double relations above mentioned, must be admitted to be of consequence in the production of these passions.

A second circumstance, which is of consequence in this affair, is the constancy and durableness of the object. What is very casual and inconstant, beyond the common course of human affairs, gives little joy, and less pride. We are not much satisfied with the thing itself; and are still less apt to feel any new degree of self-satisfaction upon its account. We foresee and anticipate its change; which makes us little satisfied with the thing itself: We compare it to ourselves, whose existence is more durable; by which means its inconstancy appears still greater. It seems ridiculous to make ourselves the object of a passion, on account of a quality or possession, which is of so much shorter duration, and attends us during so small a part of our existence.

A third circumstance, not to be neglected, is, that the objects, in order to produce pride or self-value, must be peculiar to us, or at least common to us with a few others. The advantages of sunshine, good weather, a happy climate, &c. distinguish us not from any of our companions, and give us no preference or superiority. The comparison, which we are every moment apt to make, presents no inference to our advantage; and we still remain, notwithstanding these enjoyments, on a level with all our friends and acquaintance.

As health and sickness vary incessantly to all men, and there is no one who is solely or certainly fixed in either; these accidental blessings and calamities are in a manner separated from us, and are not considered as a foundation for vanity or humiliation. But wherever a malady of any kind is so rooted in our constitution, that we no longer entertain any hope of recovery, from that moment it damps our self-conceit, as is evident in old men, whom nothing mortifies more than the consideration of their age and infirmities. They endeavour, as long as possible, to conceal their blindness and deafness, their rheums and gouts; nor do they ever avow them without reluctance and uneasiness. And though young men are not ashamed of every headache or cold which they fall into; yet no topic is more proper to mortify human pride, and make us entertain a mean opinion of our nature, than this, that we are every moment of our lives subject to such infirmities. This proves, that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility; though the custom of estimating every thing by comparison, more than by its intrinsic worth and value, makes us overlook those calamities which we find incident to every one, and causes us to form an idea of our merit and character independent of them. ..

We are ashamed of such maladies as affect others, and are either dangerous or disagreeable to them: Of the epilepsy;



because it gives a horror to every one present: Of the itch; because it is infectious: Of the king's evil; because it often goes to posterity. Men always consider the sentiments of others in their judgment of themselves.

A fourth circumstance, which has an influence on these passions, is *general rules*; by which we form a notion of different ranks of men, suitably to the power or riches of which they are possessed; and this notion is not changed by any peculiarities of the health or temper of the persons, which may deprive them of all enjoyment in their possessions. Custom readily carries us beyond the just bounds, in our passions as well as in our reasonings.

It may not be amiss to observe on this occasion, that the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions, very much contributes to facilitate the effects of all the principles of internal mechanism, which we here explain. For it seems evident that, if a person full grown, and of the same nature with ourselves, were on a sudden transported into our world, he would be much embarrassed with every object, and would not readily determine what degree of love or hatred, of pride or humility, or of any other passion, should be excited by it. The passions are often varied by very inconsiderable principles; and these do not always play with perfect regularity, especially on the first trial. But as custom or practice has brought to light all these principles, and has settled the just value of every thing; this must certainly contribute to the easy production of the passions, and guide us, by means of general established rules, in the proportions which we ought to observe in preferring one object to another. This remark may, perhaps, serve to obviate difficulties, that may arise concerning some causes, which we here ascribe to particular passions, and which may be esteemed too refined to operate so universally and certainly as they are found to do.

### SECTION III.

1. IN running over all the causes which produce the passion of pride or that of humility, it would readily occur, that the same circumstance, if transferred from ourselves to another person, would render him the object of love or hatred, esteem or contempt. The virtue, genius, beauty, family, riches, and authority of others, beget favourable sentiments in their behalf; and their vice, folly, deformity, poverty and meanness, excite the contrary sentiments. The double relation of impressions and ideas, still operates on these passions of love and hatred; as on the former of pride and humility. Whatever gives a separate pleasure or

pain, and is related to another person, or connected with him, makes him the object of our affection or disgust.

Hence, too, injury or contempt towards us, is one of the greatest sources of our hatred; services or esteem of our friendship.

2. Sometimes a relation to ourselves excites affection towards any person. But there is always here implied a relation of sentiments, without which the other relation would have no influence\*.

A person who is related to us, or connected with us by blood, by similitude of fortune, of adventures, profession, or country, soon becomes an agreeable companion to us, because we enter easily and familiarly into his sentiments and conceptions: Nothing is strange or new to us: Our imagination, passing from self, which is ever intimately present to us, runs smoothly along the relation or connection, and conceives with a full sympathy the person who is nearly related to self. He renders himself immediately acceptable, and is at once on an easy footing with us: No distance, no reserve has place, where the person introduced is supposed so closely connected with us.

Relation has here the same influence as custom or acquaintance in exciting affection, and from like causes. The ease and satisfaction which, in both cases, attend our intercourse or commerce, is the source of the friendship.

3. The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoined with benevolence and anger. It is this conjunction which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action. But love and hatred are not complete within themselves, nor rest in that emotion which they produce, but carry the mind to something farther. Love is always followed by a desire of happiness to the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery; as hatred produces a desire of the misery, and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. These opposite desires seem to be originally and primarily conjoined with the passions of love and hatred. It is a constitution of nature, of which we can give no farther explication.

4. Compassion frequently arises where there is no preceding esteem or friendship; and compassion is an uneasiness in the sufferings of another. It seems to spring from the intimate and strong conception of his sufferings; and our imagination proceeds by degrees, from the lively idea to the real feeling of another's misery.

Malice and envy also arise in the mind without any preceding

\* The affection of parents to children seems founded on an original instinct. The affection towards other relations, depends on the principles here explained.

hatred or injury; though their tendency is exactly the same with that of anger and ill-will. The comparison of ourselves with others seems to be the source of envy and malice. The more unhappy another is, the more happy do we ourselves appear in our conception.

5. The similar tendency of compassion to that of benevolence, and envy to anger, forms a very close relation between these two sets of passions, though of a different kind from that which was insisted on above. It is not a resemblance of feeling or sentiment, but a resemblance of tendency or direction. Its effect, however, is the same, in producing an association of passions. Compassion is seldom or never felt, without some mixture of tenderness or friendship; and envy is naturally accompanied with anger or ill-will. To desire the happiness of another, from whatever motive, is a good preparative to affection; and to delight in another's misery, almost unavoidably begets aversion towards him.

Even where interest is the source of our concern, it is commonly attended with the same consequences. A partner is a natural object of friendship; a rival of enmity.

6. Poverty, meanness, disappointment, produce contempt and dislike: But when these misfortunes are very great, or are represented to us in very strong colours, they excite compassion, and tenderness, and friendship. How is this contradiction to be accounted for? The poverty and meanness of another, in their common appearance, gives us uneasiness, by a species of imperfect sympathy; and this uneasiness produces aversion or dislike, from the resemblance of sentiment. But when we enter more intimately into another's concerns, and wish for his happiness, as well as feel his misery, friendship or good-will arises from the similar tendency of the inclination.

A bankrupt, at first, while the idea of his misfortunes is fresh and recent, and while comparison of his present unhappy situation with his former prosperity operates strongly upon us, meets with compassion and friendship. After these ideas are weakened or obliterated by time, he is in danger of compassion and contempt.

7. In respect, there is a mixture of humility with the esteem or affection: In contempt, a mixture of pride.

The amorous passion is usually compounded of complacency in beauty, a bodily appetite, and friendship or affection. The close relation of these sentiments is very obvious, as well as their origin from each other, by means of that relation. Were there no other phenomenon to reconcile us to the present theory, this alone, methinks, were sufficient.

## SECTION IV.

1. THE present theory of the passions depends entirely on the double relations of sentiments and ideas, and the mutual assistance which these relations lend to each other. It may not, therefore, be improper to illustrate these principles by some farther instances.

2. The virtues, talents, accomplishments, and possessions of others, make us love and esteem them : Because these objects excite a pleasing sensation, which is related to love ; and as they have also a relation or connection with the person, this union of ideas forwards the union of sentiments, according to the foregoing reasoning.

But suppose that the person whom we love, is also related to us by blood, country, or friendship, it is evident that a species of pride must also be excited by his accomplishments and possessions ; there being the same double relation which we have all along insisted on. The person is related to us, or there is an easy transition of thought from him to us ; and the sentiments excited by his advantages and virtues are agreeable, and consequently related to pride. Accordingly we find, that people are naturally vain of the good qualities or high fortune of their friends and countrymen.

3. But it is observable, that if we reverse the order of the passions, the same effect does not follow. We pass easily from love and affection to pride and vanity ; but not from the latter passions to the former, though all the relations be the same. We love not those who are related to us, on account of our own merit. What is the reason of this difference ? The transition of the imagination to ourselves, from objects related to us, is always easy ; both on account of the relation, which facilitates the transition, and because we there pass from remoter objects to those which are contiguous. But in passing from ourselves to objects related to us ; though the former principle forwards the transition of thought, yet the latter opposes it ; and consequently, there is not the same easy transfusion of passions from pride to love, as from love to pride.

4. The virtues, services, and fortune of one man, inspire us readily with esteem and affection for another related to him. The son of our friend is naturally entitled to our friendship : The kindred of a very great man value themselves, and are valued by others, on account of that relation. The force of the double relation is here fully displayed.

5. The following are instances of another kind, where the operation of these principles may still be discovered. Envy arises from a superiority in others ; but it is observable, that it

is not the great disproportion between us which excites that passion, but, on the contrary, our proximity. A great disproportion cuts of the relation of the ideas, and either keeps us from comparing ourselves with what is remote from us, or diminishes the effects of the comparison.

A poet, is not apt to envy a philosopher, or a poet of a different kind, of a different nation, or of a different age. All these differences, if they do not prevent, at least weaken the comparison, and consequently the passion.

This, too, is the reason why all objects appear great or little, merely by a comparison with those of the same species. A mountain neither magnifies nor diminishes a horse in our eyes: But when a Flemish and a Welsh horse are seen together, the one appears greater and the other less, than when viewed apart.

From the same principle we may account for that remark of historians, that any party, in a civil war, or even factious divisions, always choose to call in a foreign enemy at any hazard, rather than submit to their fellow-citizens. Guicciardini applies this remark to the wars in Italy; where the relations between the different states are, properly speaking, nothing but of name, language, and contiguity. Yet even these relations, when joined with superiority, by making the comparison more natural, make it likewise more grievous; and cause men to search for some other superiority, which may be attended with no relation, and by that means may have a less sensible influence on the imagination. When we cannot break the association, we feel a stronger desire to remove the superiority. This seems to be the reason, why travellers, though commonly lavish of their praise to the Chinese and Persians, take care to depreciate those neighbouring nations, which may stand upon a footing of rivalry with their native country.

6. The fine arts afford us parallel instances. Should an author compose a treatise, of which one part was serious and profound, another light and humorous; every one would condemn so strange a mixture, and would blame him for the neglect of all rules of Art and Criticism. Yet we accuse not Prior for joining his *Alma* and *Solomon* in the same volume; though that amiable poet has perfectly succeeded in the gaiety of the one, as well as in the melancholy of the other. Even suppose the reader should peruse these two compositions without any interval, he would feel little or no difficulty in the change of the passions. Why? but because he considers these performances as entirely different; and by that break in the ideas, breaks the progress of the affections, and hinders the one from influencing or contradicting the other.

An heroic and burlesque design, united in one picture, would

be monstrous, though we place two pictures of ever so opposite a character in the same chamber, and even close together, without any scruple.

7. It needs be no matter of wonder, that the easy transition of the imagination should have such an influence on all the passions. It is this very circumstance which forms all the relations and connections amongst objects. We know no real connection between one thing and another. We only know, that the idea of one thing is associated with that of another, and that the imagination makes an easy transition between them. And as the easy transition of ideas, and that of sentiments, mutually assist each other; we might beforehand expect, that this principle must have a mighty influence on all our internal movements and affections. And experience sufficiently confirms the theory.

For, not to repeat all the foregoing instances: Suppose that I were travelling with a companion through a country to which we are both utter strangers; it is evident that, if the prospects be beautiful, the roads agreeable, and the fields finely cultivated, this may serve to put me in good humour, both with myself and fellow-traveller. But as the country has no connection with myself or friend, it can never be the immediate cause either of self-value, or of regard to him: And therefore, if I found not the passion on some other object, which bears to one of us a closer relation, my emotions are rather to be considered as the overflowings of an elevated or humane disposition, than as an established passion. But supposing the agreeable prospect before us to be surveyed, either from his country-seat or from mine; this new connection of ideas, gives a new direction to the sentiment of pleasure derived from the prospect; and raises the emotion of regard or vanity, according to the nature of the connection. There is not here, methinks, much room for doubt or difficulty.

## SECTION V.

1. It seems evident, that reason, in a strict sense, as meaning the judgment of truth and falsehood, can never, of itself, be any motive to the will; and can have no influence, but so far as it touches some passion or affection. *Abstract relations* of ideas are the object of curiosity, not of volition. And *matters of fact*, where they are neither good nor evil, where they neither excite desire nor aversion, are totally indifferent; and whether known or unknown, whether mistaken or rightly apprehended, cannot be regarded as any motive to action.

2. What is commonly, in a popular sense, called reason, and is so much recommended in moral discourses, is nothing but a

general and a calm passion, which takes a comprehensive and a distant view of its object, and actuates the will, without exciting any sensible emotion. A man, we say, is diligent in his profession from reason; that is, from a calm desire of riches and a fortune. A man adheres to justice from reason; that is, from a calm regard to public good, or to a character with himself and others.

3. The same objects which recommend themselves to reason, in this sense of the word, are also the objects of what we call passion, when they are brought near to us, and acquire some other advantages, either of external situation, or congruity to our internal temper; and by that means excite a turbulent and sensible emotion. Evil, at a great distance, is avoided, we say, from reason: Evil, near at hand, produces aversion, horror, fear, and is the object of passion.

4. The common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their interest: It is not therefore the view of the greatest possible good which always influences them. Men often counteract a violent passion, in prosecution of their distant interests and designs: It is not therefore the present uneasiness alone which determines them. In general, we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the general character or present disposition of the person. What we call *strength of mind*, implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent; though we may easily observe, that there is no person so constantly possessed of this virtue, as never, on any occasion, to yield to the solicitation of violent affection and desire. From these variations of temper, proceeds the great difficulty of deciding with regard to the future actions and resolutions of men, where there is any contrariety of motives and passions.

## SECTION VI.

1. We shall here enumerate some of those circumstances which render a passion calm or violent, which heighten or diminish any emotion.

It is a property in human nature, that any emotion which attends a passion is easily converted into it; though in their natures, they be originally different from, and even contrary to each other. It is true, in order to cause a perfect union amongst passions, and make one produce the other, there is always required a double relation, according to the theory above delivered. Bu

when two passions are already produced by their separate causes, and are both present in the mind, they readily mingle and unite; though they have but one relation, and are sometimes without any. The predominant passion swallows up the inferior, and converts it into itself. The spirits, when once excited, easily receive a change in their direction; and it is natural to imagine that this change will come from the prevailing affection. The connection is, in many cases, closer between any two passions, than between any passion and indifference.

When a person is once heartily in love, the little faults and caprices of his mistress, the jealousies and quarrels to which that commerce is so subject; however unpleasant they be, and rather connected with anger and hatred; are yet found, in many instances, to give additional force to the prevailing passion. It is a common artifice of politicians, when they would affect any person very much by a matter of fact, of which they intend to inform him, first to excite his curiosity, delay as long as possible the satisfying of it, and by that means raise his anxiety and impatience to the utmost, before they give him a full insight into the business. They know that this curiosity will precipitate him into the passion which they purpose to raise, and will assist the object in its influence on the mind. A soldier advancing to battle is naturally inspired with courage and confidence, when he thinks on his friends and fellow-soldiers, and is struck with fear and terror, when he reflects on the enemy. Whatever new emotion, therefore, proceeds from the former, naturally increases the courage; as the same emotion proceeding from the latter, augments the fear. Hence, in martial discipline, the uniformity and lustre of habit, the regularity of figures and motions, with all the pomp and majesty of war, encourage ourselves and our allies; while the same objects in the enemy strike terror into us, though agreeable and beautiful in themselves.

Hope is, in itself, an agreeable passion, and allied to friendship and benevolence; yet it is able sometimes to blow up anger, when that is the predominant passion. *Spes addita suscitât iras.* VIRG.

2. Since passions, however independent, are naturally transfused into each other, if they be both present at the same time; it follows, that when good or evil is placed in such a situation as to cause any particular emotion, besides its direct passion of desire or aversion, this latter passion must acquire new force and violence.

3. This often happens when any object excites contrary passions. For it is observable, that an opposition of passions commonly causes a new emotion in the spirits, and produces more disorder than the concurrence of any two affections of equal force. This



new emotion is easily converted into the predominant passion, and, in many instances, is observed to increase its violence beyond the pitch at which it would have arrived, had it met with no opposition. Hence we naturally desire what is forbid, and often take pleasure in performing actions merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposite to the passions, is not always able to overcome them; and when it fails of that effect, is apt rather to increase and irritate them, by producing an opposition in our motives and principles.

4. The same effect follows, whether the opposition arise from internal motives or external obstacles. The passion commonly acquires new force in both cases. The efforts which the mind makes to surmount the obstacle, excite the spirits, and enliven the passion.

5. Uncertainty has the same effect as opposition. The agitation of the thought, the quick turns which it makes from one view to another, the variety of passions which succeed each other, according to the different views: All these produce an emotion in the mind; and this emotion transfuses itself into the predominant passion.

Security, on the contrary, diminishes the passions. The mind, when left to itself, immediately languishes; and in order to preserve its ardour, must be every moment supported by a new flow of passion. For the same reason, despair, though contrary to security, has a like influence.

6. Nothing more powerfully excites any affection than to conceal some part of its object, by throwing it into a kind of shade, which, at the same time that it shows enough to prepossess us in favour of the object, leaves still some work for the imagination. Besides that obscurity is always attended with a kind of uncertainty, the effort which the fancy makes to complete the idea rouses the spirits, and gives an additional force to the passion.

7. As despair and security, though contrary, produce the same effects; so absence is observed to have contrary effects, and, in different circumstances, either increases or diminishes our affection. Rochefoucault has very well remarked, that absence destroys weak passions, but increases strong; as the wind extinguishes a candle, but blows up a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea, and diminishes the passion: But where the affection is so strong and lively as to support itself, the uneasiness arising from absence increases the passion, and gives it new force and influence.

8. When the soul applies itself to the performance of any action, or the conception of any object, to which it is not accustomed, there is a certain unpliability in the faculties, and a

difficulty of the spirits moving in their new direction. As this difficulty excites the spirits, it is the source of wonder, surprise, and of all the emotions which arise from novelty, and is in itself agreeable, like every thing which enlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But though surprise be agreeable in itself, yet, as it puts the spirits in agitation, it not only augments our agreeable affections, but also our painful, according to the foregoing principle. Hence every thing that is new is most affecting, and gives us either more pleasure or pain, than what, strictly speaking, should naturally follow from it. When it often returns upon us, the novelty wears off; the passions subside; the hurry of the spirits is over; and we survey the object with greater tranquillity.

9. The imagination and affections have a close union together. The vivacity of the former gives force to the latter. Hence the prospect of any pleasure, with which we are acquainted, affects us more than any other pleasure which we may own superior, but of whose nature we are *wholly* ignorant. Of the one we can form a particular and determinate idea: The other we conceive under the general notion of pleasure.

\*Any satisfaction, which we lately enjoyed, and of which the memory is fresh and recent, operates on the will with more violence, than another of which the traces are decayed and almost obliterated.

A pleasure, which is suitable to the way of life in which we are engaged, excites more our desire and appetite, than another which is foreign to it.

• Nothing is more capable of infusing any passion into the mind than eloquence, by which objects are represented in the strongest and most lively colours. The bare opinion of another, especially when enforced with passion, will cause an idea to have an influence upon us, though that idea might otherwise have been entirely neglected.

It is remarkable, that lively passions commonly attend a lively imagination. In this respect, as well as in others, the force of the passion depends as much on the temper of the person, as on the nature and situation of the object.

What is distant, either in place or time, has not equal influence with what is near and contiguous.

\* \* \* \* \*

I pretend not to have here exhausted this subject. It is sufficient for my purpose, if I have made it appear that, in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.



## N O T E S.

### NOTE [A.] p. 7.

It is a saying of Menander, Κομψος στρατιώτης οὐδ' ἐν εἰ πλαττεῖ θεὸς Οὐθεὶς γινώσκει αὐ. Men. apud Stobæum. *It is not in the power even of God to make a polite soldier.* The contrary observation with regard to the manners of soldiers takes place in our days. This seems to me a presumption, that the ancients owed all their refinement and civility to books and study; for which, indeed, a soldier's life is not so well calculated. Company and the world is their sphere. And if there be any politeness to be learned from company, they will certainly have a considerable share of it.

### NOTE [B.\*] p. 7.

Though all mankind have a strong propensity to religion, at certain times, and in certain dispositions; yet are there few or none who have it to that degree, and with that constancy, which is requisite to support the character of this profession. It must, therefore, happen, that clergymen, being drawn from the common mass of mankind, as people are to other employments, by the views of profit, the greater part, though no atheists or free-thinkers, will find it necessary, on particular occasions, to feign more devotion than they are, at that time, possessed of; and to maintain the appearance of fervour and seriousness, even when jaded with the exercises of their religion, or when they have their minds engaged in the common occupations of life. They must not, like the rest of the world, give scope to their natural movements and sentiments: They must set a guard over their looks, and words, and actions: And in order to support the veneration paid them by the multitude, they must not only keep a remarkable reserve, but must promote the spirit of superstition, by a continued grimace and hypocrisy. This dissimulation, often destroys the candour and ingenuity of their temper, and makes an irreparable breach in their character.

\* This note explains at length the views of Hume on the character of the Priesthood as a profession; and it is therefore inserted in justice to the Author. It contains much that is true, but the truth is unhappily distorted by that prejudice which strangely dims his otherwise clear mind, whenever religion comes in its way. He supposes that religious feeling is, in its nature, evanescent, and ignores every thing like a religious habit of mind. The fallacy of this is evident from the most ordinary observation; and is proved by the law of moral sequences in the mind. Religious feeling becomes confirmed into religious habit, quite as much as a feeling of benevolence subsides into a habit of benevolence. The perfection of its moral state is in the mind's *habit* of virtue; and a *habit* of religion is the perfection of religious feeling. —Religion is not, as Hume assumes it to be a thing of momentary impulse: It is a settled habit of mind, *originating* in feeling doubtless, but confirmed by conviction and a constant practice of piety. Hence the religious Priest needs no hypocrisy to conform himself to the sanctity of his character, for sanctity, without an affectation of it, is habitual to him. As to the necessity of promoting a spirit of superstition, Hume should have known, and doubtless did, that superstition is destructive of true religion: And that the reverence of its priesthood, recognised by Christianity, has nothing of superstition in it.—ED.

If, by chance, any of them be possessed of a temper more susceptible of devotion than usual, so that he has but little occasion for hypocrisy to support the character of his profession, it is so natural for him to overrate this advantage, and to think that it atones for every violation of morality, that frequently he is not more virtuous than the hypocrite. And though few dare openly avow those exploded opinions, *that every thing is lawful to the saints*, and *that they alone have property in their goods*; yet may we observe, that these principles lurk in every bosom, and represent a zeal for religious observances as so great a merit, that it may compensate for many vices and enormities. This observation is so common, that all prudent men are on their guard, when they meet with any extraordinary appearance of religion; though at the same time they confess, that there are many exceptions to this general rule, and that probity and superstition, or even probity and fanaticism, are not altogether and in every instance incompatible.

Most men are ambitious; but the ambition of other men may commonly be satisfied, by excelling in their particular profession, and thereby promoting the interests of society. The ambition of the clergy can often be satisfied only by promoting ignorance, and superstition, and implicit faith, and impious frauds. And having got what Archimedes only wanted, (namely, another world, on which he could fix his engines), no wonder they move this world at their pleasure.

Most men have an overweening conceit of themselves; but *these* have a peculiar temptation to that vice, who are regarded with such veneration, and are even deemed sacred, by the ignorant multitude.

Most men are apt to bear a particular regard for members of their own profession; but as a lawyer, or physician, or merchant, does each of them follow out his business apart, the interests of men of these professions are not so closely united, as the interests of clergymen of the same religion; where the whole body gains by the veneration paid to their common tenets, and by the suppression of antagonists.

Few men can bear contradiction with patience; but the clergy too often proceed even to a degree of fury on this head: Because all their credit and livelihood depend upon the belief which their opinions meet with; and they alone pretend to a divine and supernatural authority, or have any colour for representing their antagonists as impious and profane. The *Odium Theologicum*, or Theological Hatred, is noted even to a proverb; and means that degree of rancour which is the most furious and implacable.

Revenge is a natural passion to mankind; but seems to reign with the greatest force in priests and women: Because, being deprived of the immediate exertion of anger, in violence and combat, they are apt to fancy themselves despised on that account; and their pride supports their vindictive disposition.

Thus many of the vices of human nature are, by fixed moral causes, inflamed in that profession; and though several individuals escape the contagion, yet all wise governments will be on their guard against the attempts of a society, who will for ever combine into one faction; and while it acts as a society, will for ever be actuated by ambition, pride, revenge, and a persecuting spirit.

near period, such as half a century, had not our father's prophecies of this kind, been already found fallacious, by the duration of our public credit so much beyond all reasonable expectation. When the astrologers in France were every year foretelling the death of Henry IV, "These fellows," says he, "must be right at last." We shall, therefore, be more cautious than to assign any precise date; and shall content ourselves with pointing out the event in general.

## NOTE [N.] p. 146.

I HAVE taken it for granted, according to the supposition of Machiavel, that the ancient Persians had no nobility; though there is reason to suspect, that the Florentine secretary, who seems to have been better acquainted with the Roman than the Greek authors, was mistaken in this particular. The more ancient Persians, whose manners are described by Xenophon, were a free people, and had nobility. Their *οικογενεαι* were preserved, even after the extending of their conquests, and the consequent change of their government. Arrian mentions them in Darius's time, *De exped. Alex.* lib. ii. Historians also speak often of the persons in command, as men of family. Tygranes, who was general of the Medes under Xerxes, was of the race of Achmænes, Herod. lib. vii. cap. 62. Artachæus, who directed the cutting of the canal about Mount Athos, was of the same family. Id. cap. 117. Megabyzus was one of the seven eminent Persians who conspired against the Magi: His son, Zopyrus, was in the highest command under Darius, and delivered Babylon to him: His grandson, Megabyzus, commanded the army defeated at Marathon: His great-grandson, Zopyrus, was also eminent, and was banished Persia. Herod. lib. iii. Thuc. lib. i. Rosaces, who commanded an army in Egypt under Artaxerxes, was also descended from one of the seven conspirators, Diod. Sic. lib. xvi. Agesilaus, in Xenophon, Hist. Græc. lib. iv. being desirous of making a marriage betwixt king Cotys, his ally, and the daughter of Spithridates, a Persian of rank, who had deserted to him, first asks Cotys what family Spithridates is of: One of the most considerable in Persia, says Cotys. Arizæus, when offered the sovereignty by Clearchus and the ten thousand Greeks, refused it as of too low a rank, and said, that so many eminent Persians would never endure his rule. Id. *de. exped.* lib. ii. Some of the families descended from the seven Persians above mentioned, remained during Alexander's successors; and Mithridates, in Antiochu's time, is said by Polybius to be descended from one of them, lib. v. cap. 43. Artabazus was esteemed, as Arrian says, *αυτοις πρωτοις Περσων*. lib. iii. And when Alexander married, in one day, 80 of his captains to Persian women, his intention plainly was to ally the Macedonians with the most eminent Persian families. Id. lib. vii.—Diodorus Siculus says, they were of the most noble birth in Persia, lib. xvii. The government of Persia was despotic, and conducted in many respects after the eastern manner; but was not carried so far as to extirpate all nobility, and confound all ranks and orders. It left men who were still great, by themselves and their family, independent of their office and commission. And the reason why the Macedonians kept so easily dominion over them, was owing to

other causes, easy to be found in the historians; though it must be owned that Machiavel's reasoning is, in itself, just, however doubtful its application to the present case.

NOTE [O.] p. 164.

It is remarkable, that in the remonstrance of the Duke of Bourbon and the legitimate princes, against this destination of Louis XIV. the doctrine of the *original contract* is insisted on, even in that absolute government. The French nation, say they, choosing Hugh Capet and his posterity to rule over them and their posterity, when the former line fails, there is a tacit right reserved to choose a new royal family; and this right is invaded by calling the bastard princes to the throne, without the consent of the nation. But the Comte de Boulainvilliers, who wrote in defence of the bastard princes, ridicules this notion of an original contract, especially when applied to Hugh Capet; who mounted the throne, says he, by the same arts which have ever been employed by all conquerors and usurpers. He got his title, indeed, recognised by the states, after he had put himself in possession: But is this a choice or a contract? The Comte de Boulainvilliers, we may observe, was a noted republican; but being a man of learning, and very conversant in history, he knew that the people were never almost consulted in these revolutions and new establishments, and that time alone bestowed right and authority on what was commonly, at first, founded on force and violence. See *Etat de la France*, Vol. iii.

NOTE [P.] p. 191.

By that *influence of the crown*, which I would justify, I mean only that which arises from the offices and honours that are at the disposal of the crown. As to private *bribery*, it may be considered in the same light as the practice of employing spies, which is scarcely justifiable in a good minister, and is infamous in a bad one: But to be a spy, or to be corrupted, is always infamous under all ministers, and is to be regarded as a shameless prostitution. Polybius justly esteems the pecuniary influence of the senate and censors, to be one of the regular and constitutional weights which preserved the balance of the Roman government. Lib. vi. cap. 15.

NOTE [Q.] p. 196.

I SAY *in part*; for it is a vulgar error to imagine, that the ancients were so great friends to toleration, as the English or Dutch are at present. The laws against external superstition, among the Romans, were as ancient as the time of the twelve tables; and the Jews, as well as Christians, were sometimes punished by them; though, in general, these laws were not rigorously executed. Immediately after the conquest of Gaul, they forbade all but the natives to be initiated into the religion of the Druids; and this was a kind of persecution. In about a century after this conquest, the emperor Claudius quite abolished that superstition

The temper of religion is grave and serious; and this is the character required of priests, which confines them to strict rules of decency, and commonly prevents irregularity and intemperance amongst them. The gaiety, much less the excesses of pleasure, is not permitted in that body; and this virtue is, perhaps, the only one which they owe to their profession. In religions, indeed, founded on speculative principles, and where public discourses make a part of religious service, it may also be supposed that the clergy will have a considerable share in the learning of the times; though it is certain that their taste in eloquence will always be greater than their proficiency in reasoning and philosophy. But whoever possesses the other noble virtues of humanity, meekness, and moderation,—as very many of them, no doubt, do,—is beholden for them to nature or reflection, not to the genius of his calling.

It was no bad expedient in the old Romans, for preventing the strong effect of the priestly character, to make it a law, that no one should be received into the sacerdotal office till he was past fifty years of age. *Dion. Hal.* lib. i. The living a layman till that age, it is presumed, would be able to fix the character.

NOTE. [C.] p. 7.

CAESAR (*de Bello Gallico*, lib. 1.) says, that the Gallic horses were very good, the German very bad. We find in lib. vii. that he was obliged to mount some German cavalry with Gallic horses. At present no part of Europe has so bad horses of all kinds as France; but Germany abounds with excellent war horses. This may beget a little suspicion, that even animals depend not on the climate, but on the different breeds, and on the skill and care in rearing them. The north of England abounds in the best horses of all kinds, which are perhaps in the world. In the neighbouring counties, north side of the Tweed, no good horses of any kind are to be met with. Strabo, lib. ii. rejects, in a great measure, the influence of climates upon men. All is custom and education, says he. It is not from nature that the Athenians are learned, the Lacedaemonians ignorant, and the Thebans too, who are still nearer neighbours to the former. Even the difference of animals, he adds, depends not on climate.

NOTE [D.] P. 9.

A SMALL sect or society amidst a greater, are commonly most regular in their morals; because they are more remarked, and the faults of individuals draw dishonour on the whole. The only exception to this rule is, when the superstition and prejudices of the large society, are so strong as to throw an infamy on the smaller society, independent of their morals. For in that case, having no character either to save or gain, they become careless of their behaviour, except among themselves.

NOTE [E.] P. 9.

I AM apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the Whites, such as the ancient Germans,



the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.

## NOTE [F.] P. 42.

PAINTERS make no scruple of representing distress and sorrow as well as any other passion: But they seem not to dwell so much on these melancholy affections as the poets, who though they copy every motion of the human breast, yet pass quickly over the agreeable sentiments. A painter represents only one instant; and if that be passionate enough, it is sure to affect and delight the spectator: But nothing can furnish to the poet a variety of scenes, and incidents, and sentiments, except distress, terror, or anxiety. Complete joy and satisfaction is attended with security, and leaves no farther room for action.

## NOTE [G.] p. 51.

THE orators formed the taste of the Athenian people, not the people, of the orators. Gorgias Leontinus was very taking with them, till they became acquainted with a better manner. His figures of speech, says Diodorus Siculus, his *ισοκλής*, his *ομοιότητες*, which are now despised, had a great effect upon the audience. Lib. xii. p. 166. *see editions Rhod.* It is in vain therefore for modern orators to plead the taste of their hearers as an apology for their lame performances. It would be strange prejudice in favour of antiquity, not to allow a British parliament to be naturally superior in judgment and delicacy to an Athenian mob.

## NOTE [H.] p. 61.

If it be asked how we can reconcile to the foregoing principles, the happiness, riches, and good policy of the Chinese, who have always been governed by a monarch, and can scarcely form an idea of a free government; I would answer, that though the Chinese government be a pure monarchy, it is not, properly speaking, absolute. This proceeds from a peculiarity in the situation of that country: They have no neighbours, except the Tartars, from whom they were, in some measure, secured, at least seemed to be secured, by their famous wall, and by the great superiority of their numbers. By this means, military discipline has always been much neglected amongst them; and their standing forces are mere militia of the worst kind, and unfit to suppress any general insurrection in countries so extremely populous. The sword, therefore, may properly be said to be always in the hands of the people; which is a sufficient restraint upon the monarch, and obliges him to lay his

*mandarins*, or governors of provinces, under the restraint of general laws, in order to prevent those rebellions, which we learn from history to have been so frequent and dangerous in that government. Perhaps a pure monarchy of this kind, were it fitted for defence against foreign enemies, would be the best of all governments, as having both the tranquillity attending kingly power, and the moderation and liberty of popular assemblies.

## NOTE [I.] p. 84.

THE more ancient Romans lived in perpetual war with all their neighbours: and in old Latin, the term *hostis*, expressed both a stranger and an enemy. This is remarked by Cicero; but by him is ascribed to the humanity of his ancestors, who softened, as much as possible, the denomination of an enemy, by calling him by the same appellation which signified a stranger. *De Off.* lib. ii. It is however much more probable, from the manners of the times, that the ferocity of those people was so great, as to make them regard all strangers as enemies, and call them by the same name. It is not, besides, consistent with the most common maxims of policy or of nature, that any state should regard its public enemies with a friendly eye, or preserve any such sentiments for them as the Roman orator would ascribe to his ancestors. Not to mention, that the early Romans really exercised piracy, as we learn from their first treaties with Carthage, preserved by Polybius, lib. iii: And consequently, like the Salée and Algerine rovers, were actually at war with most nations; and a stranger and an enemy were with them almost synonymous.

## NOTE [J.] p. 90.

A PRIVATE soldier in the Roman infantry, had a *denarius* a-day, somewhat less than eightpence. The Roman emperors had commonly 25 legions in pay, which, allowing 5,000 men to a legion, makes 125,000. *Tacit. Ann.* lib. iv. It is true, there were also auxiliaries to the legions; but their numbers are uncertain as well as their pay. To consider only the legionaries, the pay of the private men could not exceed 1,600,000 pounds. Now, the parliament in the last war commonly allowed for the fleet 2,500,000. We have therefore 900,000 over, for the officers and other expenses of the Roman legions. There seem to have been but few officers in the Roman armies, in comparison of what are employed in all our modern troops, except some Swiss corps. And these officers had very small pay: A centurion, for instance, only double a common soldier. And as the soldiers from their pay (*Tacit. Ann.* lib. i.) bought their own clothes, arms, tents, and baggage; this must also diminish considerably the other charges of the army. So little expensive was that mighty government, and so easy was its yoke over the world! And, indeed, this is the more natural conclusion from the foregoing calculations. For money, after the conquest of Egypt, seems to have been nearly in as great plenty at Rome as it is at present in the richest of the European kingdoms.

## NOTE [K.] p. 94.

THESE facts I give upon the authority of M. du Tot, in his *Reflections Politiques*, an author of reputation. Though I must confess, that the facts which he advances on other occasions, are often so suspicious, as to make his authority less in this matter.\* However, the general observation, that the augmenting of the money in France, does not at first proportionably augment the prices, is certainly just.

By the bye, this seems to be one of the best reasons which can be given, for a gradual and universal increase of the denomination of money, though it has been entirely overlooked in all those volumes which have been written on that question by Melon du Tot, and Paris de Verney. Were all our money, for instance, recoined, and a penny's worth of silver taken from every shilling, the new shilling would probably purchase every thing that could have been bought by the old; the prices of every thing would thereby be insensibly diminished; foreign trade enlivened; and domestic industry, by the circulation of a great number of pounds and shillings, would receive some increase and encouragement. In executing such a project, it would be better to make the new shilling pass for 24 halfpence, in order to preserve the illusion, and to make it be taken for the same. And as a recoinage of our silver begins to be requisite, by the continual wearing of our shillings and sixpences, it may be doubtful, whether we ought to imitate the example in King William's reign, when the clipped money was raised to the old standard.

## NOTE [L.] p. 111.

IT must carefully be remarked, that throughout this discourse, whenever I speak of the level of money, I mean always its proportional level to the commodities, labour, industry, and skill, which is in the several states. And I assert, that where these advantages are double, triple, quadruple, to what they are in the neighbouring states, the money infallibly will also be double, triple, and quadruple. The only circumstance that can obstruct the exactness of these proportions, is the expense of transporting the commodities from one place to another; and this expense is sometimes unequal. Thus the corn, cattle, cheese, butter, of Derbyshire, cannot draw the money of London, so much as the manufactures of London, draw the money of Derbyshire. But this objection is only a seeming one; for, so far as the transport of commodities is expensive, so far is the communication between the places obstructed and imperfect.

## NOTE [M.] p. 135.

I HAVE heard it has been computed, that all the creditors of the public natives and foreigners, amount only to 17,000.\* These make a figure at present on their income; but in case of a public bankruptcy, would, in an instant, become the lowest, as well as the most wretched of the people. The dignity and authority of the landed gentry and nobility, is much better rooted; and would render the contention very unequal, if ever we come to that extremity. One would incline to assign to this event a very

by penal laws ; which would have been a very grievous persecution, if the imitation of the Roman manners had not, beforehand, weaned the Gauls from their ancient prejudices. *Suetonius in vita Claudii*. Pliny ascribes the abolition of the Druidical superstitions to Tiberius, probably because that Emperor had taken some steps towards restraining them (Lib. xxx. cap. vi.) This is an instance of the usual caution and moderation of the Romans in such cases ; and very different from their violent and sanguinary method of treating the Christians. Hence we may entertain a suspicion, that those furious persecutions of *Christianity*, were, in some measure, owing to the imprudent zeal and bigotry\* of the first propagators of that sect ; and ecclesiastical history affords us many reasons to confirm this suspicion.

## NOTE [R ] p. 242.

Were I not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my readers of that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, " That tastes, and colours, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies, but merely in the senses." The case is the same with beauty and deformity, virtue, and vice. This doctrine, however, takes off no more from the reality of the latter qualities, than from that of the former ; nor need it give any umbrage either to critics or moralists. Though colours were allowed to lie only in the eye, would dyers or painters ever be less regarded or esteemed ? There is a sufficient uniformity in the senses and feelings of mankind, to make all these qualities the objects of art and reasoning, and to have the greatest influence on life and manners. And as it is certain, that the discovery above mentioned, in natural philosophy, makes no alteration on action and conduct ; why should a like discovery, in moral philosophy, make any alteration ?

## NOTE [S.] p. 250.

The Sceptic, perhaps, carries the matter too far, when he limits all philosophical topics and reflections to these two. There seem to be others, whose truth is undeniable, and whose natural tendency is to tranquilize and soften all the passions. Philosophy greedily seizes these, studies them, weighs them, commits them to the memory, and familiarizes them to the mind : And their influence on tempers, which are thoughtful, gentle, and moderate, may be considerable. But what is their influence, you will say, if the temper be antecedently disposed after the same manner as that to which they pretend to form it ? They may, at least, fortify that temper, and furnish it with views, by which it may entertain and nourish itself. Here are a few examples of such philosophical reflections.

1. Is it not certain, that every condition has concealed ills ? Then why envy anybody ?

2. Every one has known ills ; and there is a compensation throughout : Why not be contented with the present ?

3. Custom deadens the sense both of the good and the ill, and levels every thing.

\* Yes—If an uncompromising assertion of the Truth, as declared in the Gospel, can be called bigotry : But this is a gross perversion of language.—ED.

4. Health and humour all:—The rest of little consequence, except these be affected.

5. How many other good things have I? Then why be vexed for one ill?

6. How many are happy in the condition of which I complain? How many envy me?

7. Every good must be paid for: Fortune, by labour; favour, by flattery. Would I keep the price, yet have the commodity?

8. Expect not too great happiness in life: Human nature admits it not.

9. Propose not a happiness too complicated. But does that depend on me? Yes: The first choice does. Life is like a game: One may choose the game: And passion, by degrees, seizes the proper object.

10. Anticipate by your hopes and fancy, future consolation, which time infallibly brings to every affliction.

11. I desire to be rich. Why? That I may possess many fine objects, houses, gardens, equipage, &c. How many fine objects does nature offer to every one without expense? If enjoyed, sufficient: If not—See the effect of custom or of temper, which would soon take off the relish of riches.

12. I desire fame. Let this occur: If I act well, I shall have the esteem of all my acquaintance. And what is all the rest to me?

These reflections are so obvious, that it is a wonder they occur not to every man: So convincing, that it is a wonder they persuade not every man. But perhaps they do occur to and persuade most men, when they consider human life by a general and calm survey: But where any real, affecting incident happens, when passion is awakened, fancy agitated, example draws, and counsel urges; the philosopher is lost in the man, and he seeks in vain for that persuasion which, before, seemed so firm and unshaken. What remedy for this inconvenience? Assist yourself by a frequent perusal of the entertaining moralists: Have recourse to the learning of Plutarch, the imagination of Lucian, the eloquence of Cicero, the wit of Seneca, the gaiety of Montaigne, the sublimity of Shaftesbury. Moral precepts, so couched, strike deep, and fortify the mind against the illusions of passion. But trust not altogether to external aid: By habit and study acquire that philosophical temper which both gives force to reflection, and by rendering a great part of your happiness independent, takes off the edge from all disorderly passion, and tranquilizes the mind. Despise not these helps; but confide not too much in them, either, unless nature has been favourable in the temper with which she has endowed you.

#### NOTE [T.] p. 279.

It is probable that no more was meant by those who denied innate ideas, than that all ideas were copies of our impressions; though it must be confessed, that the terms which they employed were not chosen with such caution, nor so exactly defined, as to prevent all mistakes about their doctrine. For what is meant by *innate*? If *innate* be equivalent to *natural*, then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be

allowed to be innate or natural, in whatever sense we take the latter word, whether in opposition to what is uncommon, artificial, or miraculous. If by innate be meant contemporary to our birth, the dispute seems to be frivolous; nor is it worth while to inquire at what time thinking begins, whether before, at, or after our birth. Again, the word *idea* seems to be commonly taken in a very loose sense by Locke and others; as standing for any of our perceptions, our sensations, and passions, as well as thoughts. Now, in this sense, I should desire to know what can be meant by asserting that self-love, or resentment of injuries, or the passion between the sexes, is not innate?

But admitting these terms, *impressions* and *ideas*, in the sense above explained, and understanding by *innate* what is original, or copied from no precedent perception, then may we assert, that all our impressions are innate, and our ideas not innate.

To be ingenuous, I must own it to be my opinion that Locke was betrayed into this question by the Schoolmen, who, making use of undefined terms, draw out their disputes to a tedious length, without ever touching the point in question. A like ambiguity and circumlocution seem to run through that philosopher's reasonings, on this as well as on most other subjects.

#### NOTE [U.] p. 291.

THAT property is a species of *relation*, which produces a connection between the person and the object, is evident: The imagination passes naturally and easily from the consideration of a field to that of the person to whom it belongs. It may only be asked, how this relation is resolvable into any of those three, viz. *causation*, *contiguity*, and *resemblance*, which we have affirmed to be the only connecting principles among ideas? To be the proprietor of any thing, is to be the sole person who, by the laws of society, has a right to dispose of it, and to enjoy the benefit of it. This right has at least a tendency to procure the person the exercise of it; and in fact does commonly procure him that advantage. For rights which had no influence, and never took place, would be no rights at all. Now a person who disposes of an object, and reaps benefit from it, both produces, or may produce, effects on it, and is affected by it. Property therefore is a species of *causation*. It enables the person to produce alterations on the object, and it supposes that his condition is improved and altered by it. It is indeed the relation the most interesting of any, and occurs the most frequently to the mind.

END.



October, 1855.

# D'ROZARIO & CO.'S LIBRARY.

## SCHOOL BOOKS.

### HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY.

Keightley's History of India, royal 8vo. cloth, ..	4	14
Keightley's History of England, 4th ed. 2 vols. post 8vo. cloth, ..	8	12
Keightley's Elementary History of England, 12mo. bound, ....	3	0
Keightley's History of Greece, 12mo. cloth, .. ..	4	0
Keightley's History of Rome, 12mo. cloth, ... ..	4	0
Macaulay's History of England, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, ..	19	8
Markham's History of England, 12mo. cloth, ..	3	12
Tytler's Universal History, 6 vols. 12mo. cloth, .....	15	0
Russell's History of Modern Europe, a new Ed. continued to 1850, 4 vols. 8vo. cloth, .. ..	30	0
Beloe's Herodotus, translated from the Greek with Notes and Life of the Author, new ed. 8vo. cloth, .. ..	4	0
Baker's Livy; a new edition, corrected and revised, 2 vols. 8vo. cl.	10	0
Chambers' History of Rome, .. ..	1	8
Ferguson's History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic 8vo. cloth, .. ..	4	0
Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 8vo. cloth, ...	10	0
Ditto, ditto, abridged by the late Rev. C. Hereford, with Maps and General Index, 18mo. cloth, .. ..	2	0
Gillies' History of Ancient Greece, its Colonies and Conquests; from the earliest accounts, till the division of the Macedonian Empire in the East, including the History of Literature, Philosophy, and the Fine Arts, 8vo. boards, ....	4	0
Goldsmith's History of England to the Marriage of the Queen, with Questions for Examination, by Kenny, 12mo. roan, ...	2	0
Goldsmith's History of Rome; with an Introduction to the Study of Roman History, by Dymock, A. M. 12mo. roan,....	2	0
Little Arthur's History of England, 18mo. cloth, ..	1	8
Elphinstone's History of India, 8vo. cloth, ... ..	10	12
Murray's History of British India, with Continuation, comprising the Afghan War, the Conquest of Sind and Gwalior, War in the Punjaub, &c. with a Portrait of Sir Charles Napier, G. C. B. a Map of Hindustan, and other Illustrations, 12mo. cloth, ....	2	14
Pinnock's Goldsmith's History of England, by Taylor, ..	3	8
Pinnock's Goldsmith's History of Rome, by Taylor, ..	3	6
Pinnock's Goldsmith's History of Greece, by Taylor, ..	3	6
Pinnock's Catechism of the History of England, ..	0	8
Pinnock's Catechism of the History of Greece, ... ..	0	8
Pinnock's Catechism of the History of Rome, .. ..	0	8



Robertson's Charles V.; abridged edition, with Questions for the Examination of Students, 24mo. cloth, .. .. .	2	0
Watts' Scripture History, 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	1	8
Mangnall's Historical and Miscellaneous Questions; corrected, enlarged and continued to the present time, by Wright, 12mo..	2	8
Murphy's Tacitus; complete in one volume, 8vo. cloth, ....	7	0
Rollin's Ancient History, 2 vols. bound in one, royal 8vo. cloth, ..	8	0
Whiston's Translation of the complete Works of Josephus, 8vo. scl.	3	0
White's History of Great Britain and Ireland; with an Account of the Present State and Resources of the United Kingdom and its Colonies, for the Use of Schools and Private Students, with a Map of Great Britain and Ireland, and Questions for Examination at the end of each Chapter, 12mo. ..	2	4
Geography and History, by a Lady, revised and augmented by S. Maunders, 12mo. roan, .. ..	2	12
Butler's Easy Guide to Geography, for the use of Schools and Private Instructors, 18mo. cloth, .. .. .	1	0
Modern Geography by the Christian Brothers, 12mo. bound, ..	1	8
Chambers' General Treatise on Geography, .. .. .	2	4
Illustrated London Geography, by Joseph Guy, Jun. 8vo. cloth, ..	1	4
Ditto ditto, coloured Illustrations, .. .. .	1	2
Guy's (Joseph) School Geography; 21st edition, 18mo. bound. ..	1	12
Guy's (John) Geography for Children, .. .. .	1	0
Hughes' Outlines of Physical Geography; descriptive of the Inorganic Matter of the Globe and the Distribution of Organized Beings, with 8 Maps, 3rd ed. 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	2	4
Gaultier's Familiar Geography; with a concise Treatise on the Artificial Globe, square 16mo. cloth, .. .. .	1	12
Stewart's Modern Geography, with 11 Maps, 18mo. bound, ..	2	4

## ARITHMETIC AND MATHEMATICS.

Hutton's Course of Mathematics; new edition, entirely remodelled, and adapted to the Instruction now pursued in the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, by W. Rutherford, F. R. S., 8vo.	7	0
Key to ditto, by James Hickie, 8vo. cloth, .. .. .	4	4
Hymers' Plane and Spherical Trigonometry, 3d ed. 8vo. .. ..	5	4
Hind's Arithmetic, 12mo. half cloth. .. .. .	2	12
Hind's Principles and Practice of Arithmetical Algebra, 4th ed.	3	8
Hind's Principles of the Differential Calculus, with its application to Curves and Curve Surfaces, 2nd ed. 8vo. cloth, .. ..	10	
Ingram's Mathematics, by Trotter, 10th edition, with Key, 2 vols. 12mo. bound in leather, .. .. .	2	0
Jamieson's Elements of Algebra, comprising Simple and Quadratic Equations, designed as an Introduction to Bland's Algebraical Problems, and the higher branches of Analytics, with Key, 2nd ed. 8vo. cloth, .. .. . (14s. 6d.)		
Bland's Algebraical Problems, 9th ed. 8vo. half cloth, .. ..		
Bland's Geometrical Problems, 4th ed. 8vo. half cloth, .. ..		

Bonnycastle's Practical Geometry and Mensuration, by Tyson, 12mo. bound, .. .. .	(4s. 6d.)	2	4
Bonnycastle's Key to Algebra, by Tyson, 12mo. bound, .. .. .	(4s. 6d.)	2	4
Bonnycastle's Arithmetic, by Tyson, 12mo. bound, .. .. .	(3s. 6d.)	1	12
Key to ditto, 12mo. bound, .. .. .	(4s. 6d.)	2	4
Chambers' Mathematics, 2 parts, .. .. .	.....	4	4
Chambers' Algebra, .. .. .	.....	2	4
Chambers' Solid Geometry, .. .. .	.....	1	8
Keith's Arithmetic, by Maynard, with Key, 2 vols. 12mo. bound, .. .. .	.....	6	8
Elliot's Elementary Course of Practical Mathematics, Part II. Practical Geometry & Mensuration, with Key, 2 vols. 12mo. cl. .. .. .	.....	3	0
Reid's First Lessons in Arithmetic, 8vo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	1	0
First Six Books of the Elements of Euclid, with numerous Exercises, 8vo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	1	4
DeMorgan's Algebra, post 8vo. .. .. .	.....	5	8
Dupin's Mathematics practically applied to the Useful and Fine Arts; by George Birkbeck, 8vo. .. .. .	(9s.)	4	8
Goodwin's Elementary Course of Mathematics; 3rd edition, 8vo. .. .. .	.....	11	0
Hirsch's Collection of Examples, Formulæ, and Calculations, on the Integral Calculus and Algebra, 8vo. half cloth, .. .. .	(12s.)	3	0
Oram's Examples in Arithmetic systematically Arranged, in four parts, third edition, 3 vols. 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	(7s. 6d.)	3	8
Tower's Intellectual Algebra; or, Oral Exercises in Algebra, for Common Schools, in which all the operations are limited to such small numbers as not to embarrass the reasoning powers, but on the Inductive Plan, to lead the Pupil understandingly, step by step, to higher mental efforts; adapted to prepare the Pupils for the study of written Arithmetic, and designed to be introductory to higher treatises on Algebra, by D. B. Tower, A. M. with Key, 2 vols. 12mo. (American) .. .. .	.....	3	0
Walkingame's Tutor's Assistant; with many Additions and Corrections, by Smith, 12mo. bound, .. .. .	.....	1	0
Key to ditto, by Smith, 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	1	8

## GRAMMARS AND DICTIONARIES.

Kenyon's English Grammar, 18mo. roan, .. .. .	.....	0	14
Key to ditto, 18mo. bound, .. .. .	.....	2	0
Langlet's Mary's Grammar; interspersed with Stories, 18mo. cl. .. .. .	.....	2	0
Lombie's Etymology and Syntax, 8vo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	4	12
Edwards' Accented Eton Latin Grammar, 27th ed. 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	1	8
Crowquill's Pictorial Grammar; with 120 humorous illustrations. 16mo. extra cloth, gilt, .. .. .	(5s.)	1	8
Giles' English Parsing, comprising the Rules of Syntax, exemplified by appropriate Lessons under each Rule, with an Index containing all the parts of Speech in the different Lessons inserted, for the use of Schools, Private Teachers, and Elderly Students, new edition, 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	1	0
Murray Simplified; or, English Grammar adapted for the use of Junior Classes, and Private Families, 18mo. cloth, .. .. .	.....	0	10

Hamel's Universal French Grammar; being an accurate system of French Accidence and Syntax, on a Methodical Plan, a new edition, greatly improved by Kenny, 12mo. bound, . . . . .	2	4
Hamel's Grammatical Exercises on the French Language; compared with the English, a new edition, carefully revised and greatly improved by Kenny, 12mo. bound, . . . . .	4	0
Murray's abridged English Grammar, 18mo. . . . . (1s.)	0	7
Murray's Grammar, by Davis, 18mo. bound, . . . . .	0	10
Adair's 500 Questions and Exercises on Murray's Grammar, also on Irving's Composition, 18mo. stitched, . . . . .	0	8
Parker's Progressive Exercises in English Composition, 12mo. cloth, . . . . .	1	0
Addison's complete System of Punctuation, 18mo. . . . .	1	0
Cobbett's Grammar of the English Language, 12mo. . . . .	1	12
Corner's Play Grammar; or the Elements of Grammar explained in Easy Games, with Illustrations 12mo. stitched, 10 As. cloth, . . . . .	1	0
Eton Latin Grammar; by Smith, 12mo. bound, . . . . .	0	12
Ditto ditto, by Davis, 12mo. bound, . . . . .	0	12

A New Accurate Pronouncing and Explanatory English Dictionary, chiefly designed for the use of Schools, yet equally adapted for a standard of general reference, containing an extensive collection of Scientific Words, and Modern Terms in the several Departments of Literature, not to be found in any similar Work. Subjoined is a Vocabulary of Latin, Greek, and Scripture Proper Names, with an Epitome of the Heathen Mythology, &c. &c. by John Murray, 12mo. cloth, . . . . . 1 8

~~This~~ This Volume is neither a transcript nor an abridgment of any preceding work, but an amalgamation of the choicest materials selected from the best authors, containing a greater number of words (many of which are not in any Dictionary) than any similar publication of double the price and magnitude.—*Preface.*

Johnson and Walker's Dictionary combined, 8vo. cloth, . . (12s.)	5	0
Walker's Pronouncing English Dictionary, with a Supplement, . . . . .		
consisting of upwards of 5,000 new words and Scientific Terms recently incorporated with the Language, by E. Smith, Fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland, 8vo. bound in imitation cloth, . . . . .	3	0
Ditto ditto, Russia, . . . . .	4	0
Ditto ditto, with Key, 8vo. bound in imitation Russia, . . . . .	4	8
Walker's Critical Pronouncing Dictionary, with upwards of 3,000 words, by the Rev. John Davis, A. M. 8vo. cloth, . . . . .	7	0
Ditto ditto, by Smart, 4th Ed. 8vo. cloth, . . . . .	7	0
Walker's Rhyming Dictionary, post 8vo. cloth, . . . . .	3	8
Knowlton's Pronouncing English Dictionary, with above 50,000 Additional Words, 8vo. cloth, . . . . .	4	8
Johnson's Dictionary for the use of Schools, 32mo. roan, gilt edges, . . . . .	0	12
Ditto ditto, a better edition, 18mo. roan, marbled edges, . . . . .	0	12

~~This~~ This Dictionary, published by Francis Orr & Sons of Glasgow, is greatly improved by the addition of several thousand words.

Johnson's Dictionary, with Walker's Pronunciation of all difficult or doubtful words, and Marks to show where to double the Consonant in the Participle, 32mo. cloth, . . . . . (2s. 6d.)

Chamberlain's Young Scholar's New English Dictionary, containing every word in common use fully Explained and Accepted, to which are added explanations of marks and abbreviations on the spelling and meaning of words; short rules for pronunciation; spelling lessons in words of one, two, and three syllables, 2mo. cloth, .. .. . (2s. 6d.)	1	4
Enfield's Pronouncing Dictionary, in which the Accentuation, Orthography, and Pronunciation of the English Language is distinctly shown, new edition, to which is subjoined a Chronological Table of Remarkable Events, and Directions for addressing persons of rank by letter or in conversation, royal 18mo. ...	1	8
Tegg's Dictionary of Chronology, from the Birth of Christ to the present Time, Fifth Edition, enlarged & improved, 766 pages, 8vo. (9s.)	4	8
Barrow's Popular Dictionary of Facts & Knowledge, with illustrations, .. .. .	2	4
Buchanan's Technological Dictionary; explaining the Terms of the Arts, Sciences, Literature, Professions, and Trades, 18mo. ..	4	4
Carpenter's Dictionary of English Synonymes, 18mo. cloth, ..	1	8
Crabb's Dictionary of General Knowledge, 5th ed. 12mo. cloth, ...	5	8
Lempriere's Classical Dictionary, by Smith, 8vo. cloth, ...	5	0
Mitchell's Portable Encyclopædia, 8vo. cloth, .. .. . (2 s.)	7	0
Rhyming Dictionary, for the use of Young Poets; with an Essay (of 42 pages) on English Versification, and Explanatory Observations on the selection and use of the Rhymes, 12mo. stitched, .. .. .	1	0
Ainsworth's Latin and English and English and Latin Dictionary; by Thomas Moore, D. D. materially improved by John Carey, new ed. 8vo. .. .. .	6	8
Meadows' Italian and English Dictionary, in two parts—I. Italian and English—II. English and Italian, 10th ed. 18mo. cloth, ...	4	4
Durkan's New Hebrew and English and English and Hebrew Lexicon; to which is appended a New Hebrew Grammar, ...	4	4

## MISCELLANEOUS.

Anthon's Horace, with Explanatory Notes; selected from the larger edition; revised and corrected by J. Boyd, LL. D. Master of the High School, Edinburgh, 12mo. roan, ....	4	0
Anthon's Sallust; with Copious English Notes, fifth edition, by J. Boyd, LL. D. 12mo. roan, .. .. .	3	0
Bacon's Advancement of Learning, with Notes, and the Latin Quotations translated, 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	0	12
Con's Essays, edited and explained for the Use of the Hindu Students, by D. L. Richardson, 2nd improved ed. 12mo. cloth, ..	1	8
do ditto, first edition, 12mo. cloth, .. .. .	1	0
do's Reading Exercises, 12mo. .. .. .	0	8
do's Universal Preceptor; by Kenny, 18mo. roan, .. .. .	2	8
do's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres; a new ed. with an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. Thomas Dale, 12mo. cloth, ..	3	0
do's Ovid's Metamorphoses, 12mo. cloth, .. .. . (4s. 6d.)	1	6
do's Guide to the Scientific Knowledge of Things Familiar, .. .. .	2	0

Brinkley's Elements of Astronomy, 6th ed. by Luby, 8vo. cloth...	6	0
Brown's Concordance, 18mo. cloth, .....	1	0
Brown's Lectures on Ethics; with a Preface by Dr. Chalmers, 8vo.	5	8
Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, 8vo. cloth, ..	8	0
Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful, 32mo. cloth, ....	1	0
Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature, to which are added, two Brief Dissertations, one of Personal Identity; and the other of the Nature of Virtue, 12mo. cloth, .. (3s.)	1	3.
Byron's (Lord) Poetical Works; with Life and Notes by Allan Cunningham, 12mo. cloth, gilt edges, ..	8	8
Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, 8vo. cloth, ...	2	12
Campbell's Life and Poetical Works, with Illustrations, 18mp. cl.	1	12
Chambers' First and Second Book of Drawing, 2 parts, .....	2	0
Chesterfield's Advice, .. ..	0	12
Cooke's Letter Writer; <i>Illustrated Edition</i> , with Letters from the Writings of Bishop Heber, Robert Hall, Hannah More, Dr. Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, Kirke White, Cowper, &c. 18mo. cl.	0	10
Cowper's Poems, with a Sketch of his Life by Greathead, 18mo. cl.	1	4
Cruden's Concordance, imperial 8vo. cloth, .. (14s.)	7	0
Cruden's Concordance, edited by John Eadie, with Introduction by David King, 14th ed. 8vo. cloth, ... (9s.)	3	8
D'Isidario and Co.'s Scholastic Course, No. 3, edited by Charles Lewis Montague, 12mo. cloth, ..	2	0
Dalton's Progressive Drawing Book, in Outline and Colors, 24 Plain and 24 Colored Plates, ....	7	8
Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners, with Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakspeare, 40 Engravings, 8vo. cloth, .. (14s.)	7	0
Drawing Book of Flowers (The); for the use of Schools and self-instruction, designed by Carl Köpper, 2 parts, ..	2	
Dryden's Poetical Works, with Illustrations by John Franklin, 12mo. handsomely bound in cloth, .....		
Dryden's Virgil, 18mo. cloth, ..		
Elementary Natural Philosophy; being Demonstrations of the Propositions in Mechanics and Hydrostatics, 12mo. ....		
Enfield's Speaker; or, Miscellaneous Pieces, selected from the Best English Writers, and disposed under proper heads, with a view to facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading, and Speaking: to which is prefixed an Essay on Elocution, 12mo. ....		
Fennell's Analysis of Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, 18mo. sewed, ..		
Ferguson's Ovid, with Index, 8th ed. 18mo. bound, ..		
Gay's Fables, with 100 illustrations, 24mo. cloth, ...		
Goldsmith's Miscellaneous Works, comprising the "Vicar of Wakefield," "Citizen of the World," Poetical Works, &c. with an Account of his Life and Writings, 8vo. cloth, gilt.		
Goldsmith's Essay and Miscellaneous Pieces, 32mo. cloth.		
Goldsmith's Deserted Village and the Traveller, 16mp. cloth.		
Goss's Juvenile Letter Writer, 18mo. cloth, ....		





